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Reading Texts: A Process of Discovering and Recovering Context

by

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Abstract

This paper reflects a reading process. It accounts for what can happen in an encounter between a reader and a text. Specifically, it is concerned with exploring 'iconographic traces' of Bhartṛhari's thought in Vygotsky's *Thought and Language* and is a subjective account of an attempt at understanding a text within a cross- cultural setting. The nature of the inquiry juxtaposes the Eastern and the Western traditions, and touches upon a very subjective experience about contextual absence.

To get at this process more clearly and look at it in more detail the paper first indicates parallel ideas in the two texts – *Thought and Language* and the *Vākyapadiya*. This consists of an internal dialogue with Vygotsky in the form of commentaries. Second, it questions the conventional perspective of placing Vygotsky within a European context. The paper proposes an alternate 'global perspective'. Third, it comments on cultural and intellectual ties between the east and the West in search for a historical grounding for the tracings of Indian thought in Vygotsky's *Thought and Language*. Fourth, it gives a brief description of Bhartṛhari's theory of 'sphoṭa'. The doctrine of sphoṭa reveals Bhartṛhari's philosophy of language.

Synthesizing the reading experience the concluding remarks highlight significant similarities and parallels between Vygotsky and Bhartṛhari's thought and also speculate upon a genealogical view of Vygotsky's ideas tracing them to Bhartrhari's theory of Sphoṭa. Such speculation rests on the assumption that Bhartṛhari's thought might have found an expression in Vygotsky's scientific experiments.

This paper reflects a reading process as a subjective journey and is the result of investigating the first dim stirrings of intuitive thought.

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Chapter I
Introduction

The Problem and the Approach

Reading Vygotsky's *Thought and Language* I was reminded of the Indian Philosophical tradition. I wondered, - could it be that Bhartṛhari's *Vākyapadiya* served as the foundation text for Vygotsky's *Thought and Language*? Since introductions and notes on Vygotsky and his text did not contain any reference to Indian thought, I decided to investigate. Thus began the reading process that would engage me on a most interesting journey in the pursuit of knowledge. This paper is supposed to be a reflection of this reading process.

The above question presented a crisis because, not only did it interfere in the interpretation of Vygotsky's text according to the context outlined by Kozulin, but it also brought to mind anecdotal references of the contribution of Vedic ideas to modern science. There was a conflict between what I was reading and my intuition, or in other words my inherited (cultural) knowledge. My thoughts were, that it might be that Vygotsky took Indian psychology seriously and was involved in testing the Indian theories of language 'scientifically'? Rather than accept the dilemma as an idiosyncratic interpretation, I pursued it as something to be investigated.

The process of reading was, to me a journey, the itinerary taking shape as reading progressed through tours and detours, digressions and regressions, the crossing of disciplinary boundaries, and reasserting them through criss-crossing of references.

Surfing through the multiplicities of meanings of the text, I realized that a text could present itself very differently to different readers. The beginnings of this paper lie in this realization. In the writing of this paper, I engage in an act of theoretical and interpretive self-reflection, one that involves the text, as well as the reader in a dialogical tension. I see this dialogical tension as a process of convolution, which brings together the world of the reader, the text and the author and gives the encounter new and alternative directions. The paper reflects both aspects of my reading experience – the ones that I am able to put in order and articulate, and the ones that escape the rational and lie in the realm of the impossible and the intuition, the reality that language itself is incapable of capturing. As a solitary reader I had inadvertently stepped into the world of contemporary research concerning the role of the reader and the interpretation of texts. Such was the thrust of the process of reading. This is not all; I realize that the writing of this paper is hardly the end, but part of a process of self-actualization. According to Indian thought, there are three ways to seek reality or unity – the yoga of devotion; of work, and of knowledge. In pursuit of knowledge through reading, one can sometimes feel the reality behind the words. (Dyne, n.d)

In general, this paper accounts for what can happen in an encounter between a reader and a text. Specifically, it is concerned with exploring iconographic traces of "Bhartṛhari's" thought in Vygotsky's *Thought and Language,* and is a subjective account of an attempt at understanding a text within a cross- cultural setting. The investigation does not aim to be complete, exhaustive, or conclusive. Neither does it fall in the category of textual analysis. It does, however, propose to draw attention to interesting

parallels, and raise speculative questions. The purpose is to try to articulate that dimension between the reader and the text, where images and thoughts, consciousness and imagination seek a place to rest. This however, is easier said than done. The actual writing has had to address a complicated process where themes, concepts, cultures, histories and traditions intertwine, clash and demand a resolution. It places me at once along an East - West divide and amidst the most fashionable of themes – 'Postmodernism' with all its alliances of perspectives such as: Phenomenology, Hermeneutics, New Historicism, and Semiotics.

The nature of my inquiry juxtaposes the Eastern and the Western traditions, and speculates on some general, related questions, such as:

Is it possible to explore further the 'context' within which Vygotsky's *Thought and Language* operates and place it within a 'global perspective'? I pose this question because, to get to the meanings of the text, the reader has to recover and discover for oneself the context of the text.
Can a genealogical perspective be established for Vygotsky's *Thought and Language*.
Could Bhartṛhari and Vygotsky become partners in a dialogue?

A full and comprehensive study of Bhartrhari's and Vygotsky's texts and how they relate to each other, is beyond the scope of this paper and my competence. My paper primarily reflects my reading process, and through that exploration looks at tracings of influences on Vygotsky's *Thought and Language*, and touches upon a very subjective experience about contextual absence, or gaps in my understanding of the text as I first experienced them.

The paper can be looked upon as that perspective which would never have materialized had it not been for the method of inquiry. Self-reflection as that method,

helped articulate the process of moving from an initial intuitive discovery, to a patient and critical investigation. My knowledge of Bhartṛhari and Vygotsky grew out of the parallels between them, which I kept finding with each new reading encounter. My endeavour has been, above all, an act of learning. It is learning when one learns that it is possible to share what one has learned, even if this means just posing a question and exploring possible answers without arriving at a definitive one. However, arriving or not arriving at definitive solutions is one kind of reading process; another would be to regard the process of reading as the coming together, and going apart of different streams of thoughts, the ones that lead into the text and ones that lead out of the text onto new trails – a process that opens up the thinking of "unthought of thoughts" to borrow the phrase from Heidegger.

The attempt throughout has been to remain true to reflecting a process, in this respect a reading process, which is a dynamic embedded in so many interconnected strands of intertextuality, that consciousness is never at rest and language forever groping. Does a reader ever arrive at a unity? Is the text ever really actualized? Is the self of the reader ever actualized? Within a process there are no arrivings only indications.

How and Why the Inquiry Started

Reflecting on a reading process is not easy. Between the reading which takes place earlier, in stages and with disruptions, and the later writing of these reflections, is a process all its own. One has to somehow collect thoughts and ideas and process them. In the writing of these pages while I try to be as close to the first reading and the first reflections, I nevertheless have to make changes in terms of selection and organization based on later readings. The authenticity of a true reflection is somewhat lost in the process. Reading Vygotsky stirred many questions and here I will try to collect those which seemed important enough to initiate further research and exploration. In doing so I may inadvertently overlook, or discard other important or urgent questions, but such is the nature of self-reflective writing.

Perhaps I can divide the questions into two categories: ones that evoked connections with Indian philosophical thought, and others which made me want to explore more about the times and people of the era in which Vygotsky lived. In other words one set of questions led me to read more about Classical Indian thought and Bhartrhari, the other led me to investigate the historical and intellectual atmosphere of the times of Vygotsky. The two sets of questions are however interconnected, one springs from the other, and together they form the various strands of the process this reader engaged in.

The first day of class in graduate school, in which we studied Vygotsky, while Prof. Medway (the instructor) was going over general introductions to the course, explaining in the introductory lecture 'levels of speech' in Vygotsky's *Thought And*

Language, I was struck by the similarities between Vygotsky's ideas and some of the readings I had been doing on my own. I could not help exclaiming – THAT'S Bhartṛhari! (Bhartṛhari is a 5th Century philosopher of the Grammarian school of Classical Indian Thought). So, I went to the library and checked out Harold Coward's book on Bhartrhari. The book had not been checked out in ten years!

I tried to dismiss the similarities I found in the two texts - reasoning that similar ideas can perhaps be encountered in different cultures, and that two philosophers could independently think along the same lines; however, as soon as I acquired of Vygotsky's book and read the introductory chapters, I could not help thinking that what I was reading related to the verbal culture in which I was raised. The words that particularly interested me were: thought, consciousness, and reality. Not having formally studied Indian thought, I found it difficult to satisfactorily articulate my feelings. The one thing that I felt vaguely sure about was that consciousness, reality and action had Sanskrit parallels in the notions Sattva, Tamas and Rajas. If Vygotsky was involved in exploring the concepts of Sattva, Tamas, and Rajas - then he was in company with the classical philosophers of India who had made this a central focus of their inquiry.

As the class progressed through the different chapters of *Thought and Language*, analyzing and discussing Vygotsky, I spent my spare time reading Bhartrhari. It was not until we came to the 7th chapter of Vygotsky's book that I decided to note points that appeared similar in thought between the two philosophers. In the journal entries required for the course, I mentioned the fact that there appeared to be more than a slight correlation between certain ideas presented in Bhartrihari's *Vakyapadiya* and Vygotsky's

Thought and language; however, I found no mention of Vygotsky being acquainted with ancient Indian philosophy. Two statements that Kozulin quotes from Vygotsky, helped me in my inquiry. These are:

> 1. The resolution to the crises comes from the crisis itself;
>
> 2. Psychological inquiry is investigation and like the criminal investigator the psychologist must take into account indirect evidence and circumstantial clues- which in practice means works of art, philosophical arguments, and anthropological data are no less important (Vygotsky, 1997: *xx; xv*).

I decided to follow Vygotsky's advice and do some armchair investigations of my own. After repeated readings of the text – *Thought and Language*, I noticed the significance of Vygotsky's opening remarks in the author's preface to *Thought and Language:*

> This book is a study of one of the most complex problems in psychology, the interrelation of thought and speech. We have attempted at least a first approach to this task by conducting experimental studies of a number of separate aspects of the total problem… (Vygotsky, 1997, *lx*)

Vygotsky does not claim the problem of thought and speech has not been investigated; rather, he says, "As far as we know, this problem has not yet been investigated experimentally in a systematic fashion." The thought crossed my mind that perhaps Vygotsky was investigating Bhartrihari's ideas experimentally. This led me to focus my attention on classical Indian philosophical thought.

Interestingly, I played with the idea that a possible translation of the title of Bhartṛhari's *Vākyapadiya* could be 'thought and language'. *Vākyapadiya* = sentence/thought speech word/language. Howard Coward says, "nineteenth century and

early twentieth century renewal of interest in language in the west was influenced by scholars such as von Humbolt, Max Muller, and Cassirer, all of whom gave considerable attention to the Sanskrit Grammarian tradition"(1976: 115). For me, however, this was enough to start thinking of a possible area of investigation, -- scholarship in the 19th century – especially as it relates to Indological studies in the West.

I started looking for information on Indological studies in Russia, which in turn led me to the German Philosophers. I kept a running list of personalities, as I came upon them in my readings. I also tried to keep a short biographical sketch on each one of the personalities with the hope that the information I was putting together might reveal further connections and patterns. The result was a fascinating array of personalities, and a curious connection of histories that included not only European scholars, but South Asian personalities as well. From the information that emerged I began to get an idea of the period discourse of the times. The question that now emerged was - How does Vygotsky's *Thought and Language* fit within the intellectual discourse of the period, which focused on the contributions of Indological studies? Scholarly endeavour is closely linked to the social, political, economic, and religious, ideas of the times; in other words, consciously or unconsciously our culture exerts a tremendous influence on our being.

Frank Kermode expresses this idea thus:

> Our period discourse is controlled by certain unconscious constraints, which made it possible to think in some ways to the exclusion of others. However subtle we may be at reconstructing the constraints of past (or foreign) epistimes, we cannot ordinarily move outside the tacit system of our own (Kermode, as cited in Tuck, 1990, p. 96).

Following this line of inquiry, I was prepared to look at the wider discourse of 19th century scholarship, in the hope of arriving at possible patterns of thought, and lines of inquiry that involved the scholars at that time. Studying the information I had collected so far, I learned that:

1. The 19th Century was marked by European interest in acquiring, translating, and interpreting Sanskrit*,* Tibetan, and Pali texts.
2. Philosophers and scientists were deeply concerned with theories of relationships between mind and brain.
3. A genealogical perspective of works titled - *Thought and Languag*e - could be traced.

I also tried to logically resolve the triangular connection of iconographic traces of Bharthari in Vygotsky; Bhartṛhari's text *Vākyapadiya,* and Vygotsky and his text. When I read Vygotsky and I see "Bhartṛhari" (in a cultural sense), is Bhartṛhari real or an illusion? I tried to rationalize the problem as a problem of perception and inference. How is one to distinguish the real from the illusion? The most common example of perceptual illusion in Indian epistemology is that of mistaking a piece of rope for a snake. If one sees a rope in the dark and thinks it is a serpent, is the serpent real or false.

Within Indian thought, there are two views regarding the discussion on 'illusion' and 'the real' or 'appearance' and 'reality'. Both views belong to the realist school of thought**.** The first view suggests that so long as the illusion lasts, we see the illusory

object existing in front of us; we could not have mistaken the rope for a snake, unless we already know what a snake is, i.e. unless we have seen the snake already. When we see the illusory snake, we have the rope in view and remember the snake already seen; but we do not cognize the difference between the two; therefore, we take the object to be a snake. So the illusion is only this non-cognition (agraha*,* akhati) of the difference between the object seen and the object remembered. The illusory object is not characterized as a non-entity because there is no positive error in illusion, and perception – in fact all knowledge – is always true. Our consciousness cannot commit a mistake. The second view suggests that knowledge cannot commit mistakes by itself. The mere non-cognition or non-apprehension of the difference between the rope in front and the remembered snake cannot explain the positive perception of the snake in front. Our perception of the object in front is of the form, THAT is a snake, and not of the form that and the snake. It is not merely the non-cognition of the difference between the rope and the snake, but an identification of the 'THAT' and the 'snake' that makes the perception an illusion. In fact, until later we do not know the rope at all; so there is no question at all of the difference between the rope and the snake being cognized or not cognized. What we have is the 'THAT' - the demonstrative pointing to the rope and to the snake. So, we have mistaken the rope for another object, namely the snake. Here, the object in front is identified by us, as an object remembered. This doctrine is called the doctrine of the cognition of a different object *(*viparita-khyāti*)* since the serpent is obviously different from the rope (Raju, 1971, p.75).

The above views represent the realist and the pluralist (Mimāmsakā*)* school of thought. We generally think that in the above scenario, the snake is false, it is only an idea; but according to the realists, it is real because it is a remembered snake. If after realizing that the object in front is a rope, we ask ourselves why we saw a snake instead, we shall find that it is a remembered snake and, if we try we can trace it back to some past perception of a snake. So, we are left with the statement: THAT is real, the ROPE is real, and the SNAKE is also real (Raju, 1971, p. 75).

How does this line of reasoning tie in with Vygotsky? Perhaps in the statement "THAT is Bhartrihari.*"* The "THAT" is real, "BHARTṚHARI" is real, and VYGOTSKY is real. Within this logic all such realities have importance. However, it is impossible to take the argument further, unless we recover the context of Vygotsky and his text. At the beginning of the chapter entitled 'Vygotsky in Context', Kozulin states:

> The bits and pieces we have been able to gather about Vygotsky's life portray.…We do not know much about Vygotsky's life. He left no memoirs, and his biography has yet to be written. That leaves us with the task of putting together the scattered reminiscences of Vygotsky's friends and co- workers (Kozulin, 1997, p. xi).

The above passage as well as Kozulin's remarks at the end of the same chapter must be read critically:

> This new translation is based on the 1934 edition of 'Myshenie i rech', the only one actually prepared although imperfectly by Vygotsky himself. In it I have sought to follow Vygotsky's line of thought as closely as possible, departing from it only when it repeats itself or when the logic of Russian discourse cannot be directly rendered in English. Substantial portions of the 1962 translation made by the late Eugenia Hanfmann and Gertrude Vakar have been retained. One last word., being well aware that he was losing in his struggle with tuberculosis, Vygotsky had no time for the luxury of including well prepared, references in Myshlenie i rech. Often he simply named a researcher without mentioning any exact work. At the same time, many of his references are now obscure figures. Therefore to place Vygotsky's work in proper context requires explanatory notes (1997, p,.*lvi*).

I couldn't agree more. I am left wondering if Bhartṛhari the 5th Century Grammarian and the author of *Vākyapadiya* is one of those 'obscure' figures. The opening statements by Vygotsky and the closing statements by Kozulin put Vygotsky's *Thought and Language* among other highly interpretable texts, in the mind of this reader at least, and give considerable impetus to the interpretive process.

In order to take a clearer and more detailed look at this process, this paper proposes to:

1. Indicate the parallel ideas presented in the two texts – *Thought and Language* and the Vakyapadia.
2. Apply the framework of Widdowson's concept of the 'co-operative principle'. Widdowson says, one might decompose a written passage into its constituent points of interaction, building up sequences for later conversions into paragraphs of written language (Widdowson, 1979, p.176): in other words, convert a non-reciprocal discourse into a reciprocal version. If I apply this principle to selected passages from *Thought and Language*, where would they lead? What would they reveal?
3. Review the literature, which formed a part of the reading process with a focus on a 'global perspective' on Vygotsky.
4. Comment on cultural and intellectual ties between the east and the West specially, during the early 19 and the early 20th century.
5. Give a brief description of Bhartṛhari's theory of "Sphoṭa". The doctrine of Sphoṭa reveals Bhartṛhari's philosophy of language. It assumes importance because Bhartṛhari "rather than immersing himself in mystical meditation, sets out to analyze the meanings of words and the means by which such word knowledge is manifested and communicated in ordinary experience" (Coward, 1976, p. 6).
6. Examine aspects of the investigation and comment on the reader/text relationship.

Organization

The themes above have been organized into the following chapters. Chapter 1 serves as the introduction to the paper. It emphasizes the reflective nature of my reading process and reveals how and why my inquiry started. Chapter 2 deals with questions that arose while reading Vygotsky's *Thought and Language.* It consists of my internal

dialogue with Vygotsky within the framework of commentaries. The format is informal to allow the dialogue to unfold spontaneously and thus be more readable. Chapter 3 deals with the question of perspective on Vygotsky and here I propose to put Vygotsky within a 'global perspective', moving away from a Eurocentric approach of placing Vygotsky strictly within the European context. Though all the chapters reflect the directions of my reading process, chapters 4, and 5 specifically deal with readings related to European involvement with the East; and an introduction to Bhartṛhari and his theory of sphoṭa respectively. Chapter 6, the last chapter, presents a synthesis of my reading experience. It presents examples of parallels between Vygotsky and Bhartṛhari, which surfaced during the reading experience; together with my concluding reflections on the reading process – a process, which consists of actualizing both the text and the self of the reader. Just as the text needs a reader to be actualized, so, too the reader needs the text to actualize the self.

Chapter 2
Quotes and Commentaries

The cooperative process

According to Widdowson, reading is an act of participation in a discourse between interlocutors. It is regarded not as reaction to a text but as interaction between writer and reader mediated through the text. This interaction is governed by the 'co-operative process', where encoding is a matter of providing directions and decoding a matter of following them. In this interactional exchange what is actually expressed is vague, imprecise and insignificant, it is satisfactory only because it provides the interlocutors with directions to where they can find and create meanings for themselves. Widdowson suggests that this kind of creativity is not exclusive to reading but is a necessary condition for the interpretation of any discourse. Spoken as well as written discourse, operate in accordance with this co-operative principle (Widdowson, 1979, pp. 174-175).

The following is an attempt to outline the inner dialogue in which I was engaged while reading Vygotsky's *Thought and Language.* Building on the co-operative process outlined by Widdowson, this section constructed in the form of commentaries, follows a tradition in which highly complex and technical arguments are illustrated by excerpts of text followed by commentaries either by the author himself or by others. The textual selections -Author's Preface; Chapter 1 - The Problem and the Approach; and Chapter 7 - Thought and Word, are from Vygotsky's *Thought and Language* – 1997. The selections

from the Author's preface; and Chapter 1, follow the sequence as they appear in the text. This being one of the reasons I've chosen these sections of the text. The above format makes it possible for me to juxtapose the two schools of thoughts –East and West – by presenting quotes from Vygotsky followed by my commentaries. This format is an outgrowth of a reading process that naturally lends itself to the dialogue/commentary style.

The framework is informal and as much as possible true to the original reflections; therefore, it does not always follow the strictly technical practice of citing sources and references, but presents thoughts as they appeared. While the inner dialogue explores questions and ideas that surfaced during the initial reading process, their presentation here in the form of commentaries represents what I call the external dialogue. Through commentaries this chapter reveals the dialogical relationship between the author, the text and the reader bringing to surface the subjective experiential process of the reader's consciousness.

Quotes and Commentaries

Quotes from Vygotsky's *Thought and Language* are presented in bold print to distinguish them from other quotes; my commentaries and reflections follow the quotes.

> **This book is a study of one of the most complex problems in psychology, the interrelation of thought and speech. (Vygotsky, 1997,p .ix)**

Vygotsky is represented as one of the classical figures in the history of psychology. There is a vast amount of literature available about the impact of his ideas

on modern psychology, pedagogy, social sciences, epistemology and cognition. He is recognized for creating the cultural-historical approach, which is one of the leading psychological theories of the 20th century on human consciousness (Veresov). It was within this context - the study of consciousness- that we were discussing Vygotsky's book *Thought and Language* in Professor Peter Medway's course on -Written Language and Cognition - 29.545. While explaining the significance of the book, professor Medway explained that the central point in the book is that- 'language is the means of thought and thought is a derivative of language' (class notes- Sept. 17,1997). In my attempt to understand the ideas presented in class, I read the book with a great deal of interest. In his book *Thought and Language* Vygotsky outlines his theories about the interrelation of thought and speech. In the author's preface of his book, he says:

> **As far as you know the problem of the interrelation of thought and speech has not yet been investigated experimentally in a systematic fashion. (Ibid. , p. lix)**

I read layers of meanings in this utterance. Does this mean that although the concept of the connection between thought and speech was a part of ancient philosophic discourse, this link had not yet found its way into the scientific literature of the West? Could this be the reason that Vygotsky sought to systematize it with his methods of investigation? Professor Medway outlined five important streams or themes discussed in Vygotsky's book - *Thought and Language*:

1. The connection between language and thought.
2. Words as generalizations

3. Development of speech into thinking.
4. The role of instruction in development
5. Concept development

Professor Medway also mentioned that Vygotsky was the first to do a psychological investigation by conducting experimental studies regarding the interrelation of thought and language. In the following passage, Vygotsky outlines his thoughts regarding his experimental studies.

> **We have attempted at least a first approach to this task by conducting experimental studies of a number of separate aspects of the total problem such as - experimentally formed concepts, written language in relation to thought, inner speech etc. The results of these studies provide a part of the material on which our analyses are based. (Ibid., p. *lix*)**

By 'our analyses' I presume Vygotsky is referring to Luria and himself. The meaning of "The results of these studies provide a part of the material on which our analyses are based" is not entirely clear. My question to Vygotsky would be: What constitutes the other part of the material on which his analyses are based?

In his book, *The Making of the Mind* Luria talks about his research and the importance of Vygotsky's contribution towards that research. According to Luria, the theoretical foundations of much of the experimental work of the time, were naive. Luria further states that the task of laying the theoretical foundations for his experimental work fell on Vygotsky whom he met in 1924. (Luria, 1979, p. 28-37). It follows that Vygotsky's hypotheses provided the theoretical foundations to further Luria's experimental studies; but what were Vygotsky's hypotheses based on? Did they constitute the other part of the material on which his analyses are based?

> **Theoretical and critical discussions are a necessary pre-condition of and a complement to the experimental part of the study and constitute a large portion of the book. The working hypotheses that serve as starting points for our fact-finding experiments had to be based on a general theory of the genetic roots of thought and speech. In order to develop such a theoretical framework, we reviewed and carefully analyzed the pertinent data in the psychological literature. (1997, p. lix).**

In this passage Vygotsky does not specify the literature which led to the development of his theoretical framework. This is one of the reasons that Vygotsky scholars today are trying to find a continuity in the development of his ideas leading to a dominant theory, and exploring the web of influences that contributed to this development.

> **We subjected to critical analysis those theories that seemed richer in their scientific potential, and thus could become a starting point for our own inquiry. Such an inquiry from the very beginning has been in opposition to theories that although dominant in contemporary science, nevertheless call for review and replacement. (Ibid., p. lix-lx)**

Again Vygotsky does not specify whether the theories selected by him for their scientific potential, fall strictly within the European tradition. This question comes to mind for two reasons; first, because of Vygotsky's opening statement - "as far as we know the problem of the interrelation of thought and speech has not ***yet*** been investigated experimentally in a systematic fashion"; and second, because he says that from the very beginning his inquiry was in opposition to the dominant contemporary theories. Vygotsky calls for a 'review' and 'replacement' of these dominant theories. I understand 'review', but 'replacement' would mean a substitution by new and different ideas. Where did these new ideas come from? I am reminded of Lemke's statement, in *Textual Politics- discourse and social dynamics.* In the section on Bakhtin and Heteroglossia, Lemke states:

> He (Bakhtin) worked as part of a group of scholars in the period immediately following the Russian Revolution, a time when Marxist ideas were widely respected and when there was a temporary crack in the monolithic ideology of European culture. In this period, Vygotsky began to ask about the social origins of mind... (Lemke, 1995, p. 22).

Through my readings, I learned that this period is marked by an increasing dialogue between the East and the West, specifically India and Europe. In the 1920's and 1930's Vygotsky's ideas were sharply criticized and his theory was condemned as a whole (van der Veer & Valsiner, 1993, p. 374). Was it because of the Eastern influence that Vygotsky's inquiry was in opposition to the dominant theories in contemporary science and that his theoretical investigations and claims were called 'erroneous', and 'eclectic'? Some critics also called it 'the exotic branch of Russian Psychology.'(Vygotsky,1997, p. *xliii* & *lv*). What connotations would one extend to the word "exotic"? It was also said that the theory of cultural development did not represent Soviet paedology and psychology, (van der Veer & Valsiner,1993, p. 380). Vygotsky's exact position towards Marxism was questioned. Despite this criticism, he was praised for his intellectual independence, and for his quest for synthesis. It is said that as a result of his broad knowledge of international psychology he could lead his ideas to a novel synthesis (Ibid., p. 393). The key idea here is the idea of synthesis*;* but I wonder what the term 'International psychology' denotes. Would the Indian Yoga system, which was the traditional psychology of India in Bhartṛhari's day, be included in a definition of international psychology?

> **The author and his associates have been exploring the field of language and thought for almost ten years, in the course of which some of the initial hypotheses were revised, or abandoned as false. The main line of our**

> **investigation, however, has followed the direction taken from the start. (1997, p. lxi)**

Exactly what does Vygotsky mean when he says ‘from the start’? I presume that it refers to his several years of research in this area and includes his writings prior to the text *Thought and Language;* but what was that direction that he took from the start? Is it what he says in *The Psychology of Art?*

> The first and most widespread formula of art psychology goes back to W. von Humboldt; it defines art as perception. Potebnia adopted this as the basic principle in a number of his investigations. In a modified form, it approaches the widely held theory that comes to us from antiquity, according to which art is the perception of wisdom, and teaching and instruction are its main tasks. One of the fundamental views of this theory is the analogy between the activity and evolution of language and art (Vygotsky, 1925).

Further, from the same text …….

> The psychological system of philology has shown that the word is divided into three basic elements: the sound, or external form; the image, or inner form; and the meaning, or significance (Ibid.).

M y interpretation of the above passage is as follows:

Vygotsky mentions Humbolt and Potebyna (also Schopenhauer elsewhere in the text). One cannot think of Humbolt, Potebyna, or Schopenhauer, without a connection to Indian thought. Also, Vygotsky talks about "the theory from antiquity" but finds no need to specify, which theory from which antiquity? He further mentions "the psychological system of philology". The only psychological system of philology I know about is the yoga system of Patañjali. Coward mentions this specifically (Coward, 1976). Vygotsky refers to Humbolt and the theory from antiquity; is it this direction that he took from the start? This above quote is significant from yet another perspective. Vygotsky

emphasizes that teaching and instruction are important in the acquisition of wisdom. Again this corresponds to the path of knowledge, and the role of siksa or instruction and teaching within it. In one short paragraph, Vygotsky has stated the main concepts of the philosophical tradition of the East.

Vygotsky has been described as a prodigal reader, one who was known for the acquisition of ideas from seemingly disparate fields. It is a pity it is not possible to elaborate upon his research during this ten-year period, in order to obtain a more personal account of his investigation and a better idea about the range, depth and extent of his readings.

At the beginning of their book, van der Veer and Valsiner quote Vygotsky's thoughts regarding creativity as a historically continuous process (1993, p. xi). In the passage, Vygotsky says that no innovative scientist creates ideas independently from the collective-cultural processes and cultural history, and from the interpersonal relationships in which human life is ingrained. Van der Veer and Valsiner talk about "intellectual interdependency"(Ibid., p. 393), which brings with it the notion of a cross-cultural embeddedness as well – especially if Vygotsky was interested in international psychology. This makes the idea of synthesis a very important one because it brings into play the dialogic involved not only within the local but a global perspective as well: a synthesis of Eastern and Western thought; an attempt at translatability of cultures; an example that theories do travel, and not only from the West to the East, but also from the East to the West. However, such a dialogic is missing in the literature on Vygotsky. Vygotsky is presented strictly within the European tradition. This assumption seems an

impossibility considering the fact that Vygotsky was 'keenly' interested in the 'structuralist revolution' as Kozulin states (1997, p. *xiii*). It has been established, though often not acknowledged and explicitly stated, that Indian influences found their way into European Linguistics through Saussure, who was a professor of Sanskrit and the founder of European Structuralism.

> **In this work we have tried to explicate the ideas that our previous studies contained only implicitly. We fully realize the inevitable imperfections of this study, which is no more than a first step in a new direction. (1997, p. *lxi*)**

Perhaps by 'our previous studies' Vygotsky is referring to the ideas in the passages previously indicated from his work, *The Psychology of Art*.

If one were to thoroughly explore the ideas of intertextuality and dialogism as they relate to 19th and early 20th century intellectual history, it would be difficult to ignore the wider context in which all dialogue of this period was embedded. It is this wider context that is the object of my exploration.

The following passage from van der Veer and Valsiner illustrates the point further:

> …all people involved in social discourse are co-constructors of ideas. Their social worlds include a variety of concepts of heterogeneous meanings. The individual makes use of some of these concepts and adjusts their meanings in accordance with the context in which these meanings are to be used. Other concepts may be actively rejected, or merely passed by without their being integrated into the knowledge structure that the individual is constructing. Nevertheless, even in the latter case, the presence of these concepts in the social world of the individual (and his mind) is a relevant part of the mindscape that leads to new ideas. The emergence of a new idea takes place within an individual's mind while he is participating in (immediate or deferred) social discourse. Hence the personal achievement of novel ideas is intellectually interdependent with the socially available and intellectual culturally organized raw materials, - concepts with heterogeneous meanings, innovation thus necessarily occurs in the social context- both the means (meanings) and needs (goals set by the individual in the given task setting) are at first suggested to him socially. These may later be transferred into an internal psychological sphere - thus a -Tibetan monk contemplating issues of jealousy in the isolation of his cave is involved in as much a socially

> constructed endeavour as a psychologist leading a discussion on the same topic at a conference (1993, p. 395).

I find this reference to a Tibetan monk and a leading psychologist curiously interesting. By a stretch of imagination, the psychologist in question could be Lev Vygotsky and the monk, Bhartṛhari the 5th century Grammarian philosopher! Going over my notes from Prof. Medway's class I came across passages where Prof. Medway explained how an utterance is a plastic concept, and a book represented a chain, a dialogic chain of utterances, that there are no neutral utterances. Intertextuality in this sense is built up of utterances of before; we are all engaged in a dialogic activity even in private conversation (class notes).

Keeping this in mind, it is my assumption that the research from which Vygotsky's hypotheses originated was a part of the larger discourse. I see his work as an important contribution towards the translation and translatabilities of theories – an interesting mixture of intuition and fact, East and West, science and spirituality, a true continuation of his and Luria's work in the study of the cross-cultural development of thinking! It is my speculation that the challenge his group encountered was perhaps how to make a borrowed theory acceptable and applicable, palatable to European consciousness; in other words, how to make it fit European discourse. Outside of religious mysticism and culture specific limitations, the Eastern philosophies offered a theoretical platform from which scientifically possible hypotheses could be empirically investigated. Vygotsky's work seems to chronicle the empirical experiments of the West against the philosophical suppositions of the East, and Psychology, as Kozulin rightfully

states, offered the conceptual tool. The problem of thought and speech had always been a central issue within Indian philosophic thought, and it was an important topic of discussion in the intellectual circles of Vygotsky's times. It is therefore logical that it became a focal issue of psychological investigation. Perhaps Vygotsky was trying to compare and contrast the progress made by the empirical scientific West with the theoretical suppositions of the East. Or even further, perhaps he was exploring whether science was capable of uncovering empirically within its methods, the realizations contained within Eastern philosophies. What would such findings indicate?

> **We feel that in uncovering the problem of thought and speech as the focal issue of human psychology, we have made an essential contribution to progress. Our findings point the way to a new theory of consciousness, which is barely touched upon at the end of the book. (Vygotsky, 1997, p. lxi)**

The above words of Vygotsky are crucial and related to my initial question – was Vygotsky scientifically testing the Indian theories of language? This is not such a far-fetched idea. I am reminded here of what Kristeva says in *Language the Unknown*. According to Kristeva linguistics has become a part of semiotics and to explore the semiotic realm of is to join in sociological, anthropological, and psychological research. Kristeva further says:

> As if one were returning to a time when language signified an ordered cosmogony- thinking is grasping complex reality through a full language. But this time science is present for exploration. (1989, p. 299)

Perhaps Vygotsky, too, realizing this through his empirical studies raises the idea of a first step and a new direction especially as these concepts relate to a new theory of consciousness. This is not the first instance that Vygotsky opens up the argument and the

text to the interpretive processes of the reader, delimiting the interpretive processes and yet defining it. Both Vygotsky and Kristeva depend on science for investigation and yet both refer back to antiquity. This new theory of consciousness, which is barely touched upon at the end of the book, as Vygotsky points out, is outlined in the last two paragraphs of his book:

> **If language is as old as consciousness itself, and if language is a practical consciousness- for-others and, consequently, consciousness-for-myself, then not only one particular thought but all consciousness is concerned with the development of the word. The word is a thing in our consciousness, as Ludwig Feuerbach put it, that is absolutely impossible for one person, but that becomes a reality for two. The word is a direct expression of the historical nature of human consciousness. Consciousness is reflected in a word as the sun in a drop of water. A word relates to consciousness as a living cell relates to a whole organism, as an atom relates to the universe. A word is a microcosm of human consciousness" (1997, p. 256).**

These thoughts seem to reveal Vygotsky's affinity with a philosophical tradition. The above passage is very similar to the opening verse in Bhartṛhari's text, *Vākyapadiya*:

> The beginningless and the endless one, the imperishable Brahman consciousness) of which the essential nature is the Word, which manifests itself into objects and from which is the creation of the Universe. (Bhartrhari, Cantos 1:1)

The words consciousness, sun, drop of water and atoms all have special significance within Indian thought in general and within Bhartṛhari's *Vākyapadiya* in particular. There are several other parallels as well:

> **A thought may be compared to a cloud shedding a shower of words. (Vygotsky, 1977, p. 231).**

> When their capacity is being revealed these atoms which are called speech, prompted by the effort (of the speaker) collect together like clouds (in the sky). (*The Vākyapadiya,* cantos: 1.111)

We must remember that to both Bhartṛhari and Vygotsky thought and speech are interrelated; one word could easily replace the other in a sentence. In the last paragraph of *Thought and Language* Vygotsky refers to atoms. He uses the phrase, 'as an atom relates to the universe'. How does an atom relate to the universe? Perhaps Bhartṛhari has the answer:

> The atoms, which unite and separate, transform themselves into shadows, light and darkness and also speech on account of their possessing all (possible) capabilities i.e., the capacity to be transformed into all things. (The Vākyapadiya Cantos 1:110)

Is this Vygotsky's way of pointing to the new direction*,* the new theory of consciousness that he refers to, as being barely touched upon at the end of his book? In the last two paragraphs quoted above, Vygotsky seems to be alluding to a universal consciousness or the supreme consciousness that is connected with the word. Let me elaborate here some related aspects of Indian thought which relate to Vygotsky's new direction. Vygotsky's words can be read as an indication, a crucial signpost that seem to point to Bhartṛhari'*s* text – *Vākyapadiya*. Bhartṛhari begins with the ideas that Vygotsky ends his text with. Bhartṛhari explored a similar concept, which he terms "Śabdabrahman", (śabda is word= and Brahman= consciousness) or, in other words, the supreme word principle. It is the philosophy of Sabdabrahman that is expounded in the first Canto - called Bramhakanda - of the *Vākyapadiya* from which the above passages emerge.

Bhartṛhari in his *Vākyapadiya* explores language at two levels. The first deals with linguistic relationships from the point of view of everyday usage, and the second with the same relationships from the point of view of ultimate reality. According to

Harold Coward, Bhartṛhari followed in the tradition of the original ṛṣis (seers), whose only purpose was to use the power of language to reveal that sabdabrahman is already present within the consciousness of everyone (1976: 19-20). Within this view thought and language go hand in hand, and consciousness and word are interchangeable. According to Kristeva, Bhartṛhari "outlined a theory of the sentence, which, being a process, was the only complete reality of meaning" (1989, p. 90). This is how I understand Bhartṛhari, and it is this understanding that I bring to the reading of Vygotsky's text *Thought and Language*.

It is my belief that although Vygotsky was involved in a scientific experiment, he could not completely ignore spirituality. The idea of an ultimate reality, of a universal consciousness, the spiritual aspect that Bhartṛhari expresses in the first canto, is what is alluded to in the last two paragraphs of *Thought and Language* – particularly in the notion that "a word is a microcosm of human consciousness" (Vygotsky, 1997, p.256).

What are Vygotsky's thoughts regarding spirituality? In his letter to his student, Levina, he states, "Of course, you cannot live without spirituality giving meaning to life"(Vygotsky as cited in van der Veer and Valsiner, 1993, p.16). A study of *Thought and Language* should involve both the spiritual and the scientific. In my opinion, it is this synthesis that the last two paragraphs of *Thought and Language* reflect.

Let us look at the connection from another angle. According to Kozulin, Vygotsky's research centered on exploring the relationship between consciousness, activity and reality. (Vygotsky, 1997, p.xlv). In the Yoga-Sũtra of *Vyāsa-bhāsya*, it is said that the one who knows the difference between word, cognition and thing meant is

all-knowing – Sarvāvit. The relation between word and consciousness, and between consciousness, activity and reality, is a relationship that has been much investigated in a systematic manner in the East.

It would appear that consciousness*,* activity and reality, have Sanskrit parallels in the notions of Sattva*,* Tamas and Rajas. If Vygotsky was involved in exploring the concepts of Sattva*,* Tamas, and Rajas – or consciousness, reality and action, then he was in company of the classical philosophers of India, the ancient seers who had made this a central focus of their inquiry.

Within Indian philosophic thought questions about the nature of being are intimately connected with the philosophy of language, particularly the relation between language, consciousness and being. Language is considered a fundamental concern of Indian philosophy, which has a long tradition of linguistic analysis. Within this tradition Vyākarņa or the science of grammar developed into an independent tradition, and was regarded as a darsana*,* or philosophy. A highly sophisticated science of language developed early in India, from at least the fifth century BCE, and provided the inspiration for modern linguistics through the study of Sanskrit and the translation into European languages of some of its key texts during the 19th century. The philosophic systems or darśanas espouse that language inspires, clarifies, and reveals truth and meaning, and so, it is the starting point of philosophical investigation, and in this respect, it is action. Philosophical investigation is called Brahmajijnasa in Sanskrit.

According to the rules of Sandhi (a technical term in Sanskrit grammar which refers to the rules of euphonic combination (Coward, 1976, p. 7)), Brahmajijnasa is made up of the words:

brahma = consciousness

jijnasa = curiosity/wanting to know/inquiry

Therefore, the meaning of the word is "inquiry about consciousness" (Flood, 1996, pp.244-230). Scholars within the Indian tradition, Bhartṛhari among them, have systematically investigated thought and language, and its interrelationship. Bhartrhari's ideas – specifically where he talks about word-meanings and levels of language – deal with linguistic relationships from the point of view of everyday reality, which coincides with Vygotsky's primary concern with those concepts that lend themselves to scientific testing. Through my investigations I tried to determine if indeed he took his inspiration from the philosophies of the East. At times I even toyed with the question of what sort of readings Vygotsky would have been engaged in, and if it was even possible to follow that course for myself.

> **The study of thought and language is one of the areas of psychology in which a clear understanding of interfunctional relations is particularly important. As long as we do not understand the interrelation of thought and word, we cannot answer, or even correctly pose any of the more specific questions in this area. (Vygotsky, 1997, p.1)**

Has psychology in the Western tradition not investigated this relation?

> **Strange as it may seem, psychology has never investigated the relation systematically and in detail. Interfunctional relations in general have not as yet received the attention they merit. The atomistic and functional modes of analysis prevalent during the past decade treated psychic processes in isolation. (Ibid)**

Psychology is a comparatively new field within the Western tradition. Luria, in his comments upon the state of affairs at the institute in Moscow at that time, mentions the limitations of laboratory psychology. In chapter 2 of his book *The Making of Mind*, he describes the scene in Moscow regarding research in psychology at the institute in Moscow. Luria (1979, pp. 28-37) describes a peculiar situation at the institute to which he belonged; all of the laboratories had been renamed to include the term reactions. There was a laboratory of visual reactions, of mnemonic reactions, of emotional reactions and so forth. The following are Vygotsky's comments related to this peculiar situation:

> **Methods of research were developed and perfected with a view to studying separate functions, while their interdependence and their organization in the structure of consciousness as a whole remained outside the field of investigation. (1997, p. 1)**

These concepts remained outside the field of investigation only within the Western tradition of investigation. According to P.T. Raju:

> The tension between philosophy and religion, religion and science, and science and philosophy become characteristic of the West. This was not so with Indian thought. Metaphysics and religion as understood by Indian thinkers were interrelated. Indian thinkers never felt any tension between philosophy and religion, and philosophy and science. The elucidation of the implications of our existence is found in both science and philosophy and covers the whole field of thought's endeavour (1971, p.13).

Like the Upanişadic philosophers, Vygotsky was interested in investigating the interrelation of thought and language. The following quote gives us an idea of the kinds of studies he was involved in:

> **As an example we may recall a recent attempt of this kind. It was shown that speech movements facilitate reasoning. In a case of a difficult cognitive task involving verbal material, inner speech helped to imprint and organize the conscious content. The same cognitive process, taken**

> **now as a sort of activity benefits from the presence of inner speech, which facilitates the selection of essential material from the nonessential. And finally inner-speech is considered to be an important factor in the transition from thought to external speech. (1997, p. 3)**

Vygotsky's mention of inner speech brings to mind the levels of speech explored within Indian theories of language. Just as his mention of inner speech and external speech brings to mind Bhartṛhari'*s* explorations of the levels of speech in *Vākyapadiya*, the casual mention of the word yogi without any explanation or references in the reporting of a scientific experiment conducted in the West caught my attention while reading Luria's *The Making of the Mind*. Describing one of his experiments, Luria states,

> His behaviour was also affected by his memory. He was able to control his involuntary processes, such as his heart rate and the temperature of his body, in the same way that a yogi does. A clear image of himself running fast increased his pulse rate. An image of a piece of ice on his hands decreased the temperature of his hand....(Luria, 1979, p.183.).

I am curious to know more about the involvement of Vygotsky and Luria and other Russian scholars of his time with India and Indian thought. Was Vygotsky aware of Sorokin's work? Sorokin taught at the Psycho-Neurological Institute while at St. Petersberg, he was influenced by Sri Aurobindo's teachings, and at Harvard, he conducted analysis of the ancient techniques of Yogas. Before we further explore Vygotsky's connections with Classical Indian thought, and levels of speech, let us see how Vygotsky explains the failure of former investigations of thought and language to address the interrelation of these notions:

> **The fault thus lies in the methods of analysis adopted by previous investigators. To cope successfully with the problem of the relation between thought and language, we must ask ourselves first of all what method of analysis is most likely to ensure its solution. (1997, p. 4)**

Within the Indian tradition a great deal of attention is given to methods of analysis. Methods of analysis within Indian thought is explained as the means of knowledge by which valid knowledge is attained. According to Harold Coward, the Indian approach to the study of language and linguistic problems involves using both methods of analysis, and synthesis (Coward & Raja, 1990, p. 5). Out of these two approaches, the analytical method was older and more popular. The Sanskrit term for grammar, vyākarṇa, literally means linguistic analysis.

> **Two essentially different modes of analysis are possible in the study of psychological structures. It seems to us that one of them is responsible for all the failures that have beset former investigators of the old problem, which we are about to tackle in our turn, and that the other is the only correct way to approach it. The first method analyzes complex psychological wholes into elements....This type of analysis provides no adequate basis for the study of the multiform concrete relations between thought and language that arise in the course of the development and functioning of verbal thought in it's various aspects. Instead of enabling us to examine and explain specific instances and phases, and to determine concrete regularities in the course of events, this method produces generalities pertaining to all speech and all thought. It leads us, moreover, into serious errors by ignoring the unitary nature of the process under study. The living union of sound and meaning that we call the word is broken up into two parts, which are assumed to be held together merely by mechanical associative connections. (Vygotsky, 1997, pp. 4- 5)**

The Grammarians within the Indian tradition (Pānini, Pataŋjali, Kātyāyan, and Bhartṛhari), consider the union of sound and meaning to be based on the superimposition of one on the other, creating a sort of identity – one evoking the other (Coward & Raja, 1990, p. 64). Bhartṛhari uses several technical terms – şabda, sphoṭa, dhvani, and nāda – in his discussion of the relationship between word and meaning, or the living union of sound and meaning as Vygotsky puts it. By śabda and/or sphoṭa, Bhartṛhari refers to that inner unity which conveys the meaning. Bhartṛhari, in his discussion of the sphoṭa talks

about the unity of şabda (word) and artha (meaning). According to Bhartṛhari a word without meaning is nāda (noise). Dehejia gives the following explanation:

> It is important to note that sabda at the level of sphoṭa is functionally quite distinct from nada. Bhartṛhari leaves no doubt when he asserts that şabda and nāda are different entities, emphasizing that nada is impotent without its component of artha. The marriage of şabda and artha is temporarily divorced at the level of the nāda. (Dehejia, 1996, pp. 32-33).

The discussion of şabda and nāda leads to the grammarian philosophers' view of the importance of reuniting nāda with artha. The grammarians hold the view that error is positively overcome by increasingly clear cognition, once the artha is attached. Coward describes it thus:

> Since Bhartṛhari conceives of the complete and true word meaning being achieved via the process of 'perception', albeit, mental perception, this allows for increasing degrees of clarity as one's mind positively approximates itself to the truth that is there shining forth but not yet clearly seen. Error is thus overcome by a gradual approximation to the given meaning whole, or sphota (1976: 26)

Does this seem very much like the Zone of Proximal Development that Vygotsky talks about? I am again left with many questions and my limitations in answering them.

> **Psychology, which aims at a study of complex holistic systems, must replace the method of analysis into elements with the method of analysis into units. What is the unit of verbal thought that is further unanalyzable and yet retains the properties of the whole? We believe that such a unit can be found in the internal aspect of the word, in word-meaning. (Vygotsky, 1997, p. 5)**

Vygotsky's emphasis on replacing of methods of analysis into elements, with the method of analysis into units; and the fact that such a unit can be found in the internal aspect of the word, in word meaning, reminded me of Bhartṛhari's theory of 'Sphoṭa' which explores these concepts systematically and in great detail. Bhartṛhari in particular

paid considerable attention to the whole sentence and the discussion of word-meaning rather than levels of language.

> **Contemporary psychology has nothing to say about the specificity of human vocalization, and concomitantly it has no specific ideas regarding word meaning, ideas that would distinguish it from the rest of cognitive functions. Such a state of affairs was characteristic of the old associationistic psychology, and it remains a sign of contemporary Gestalt psychology. In the word we recognize only its external side. Yet it is in the internal aspect, in word meaning, that thought and speech unite into verbal thought. (Vygotsky, 1997, p. 5).**
>
> **Our experimental as well as theoretical analysis, suggests that both Gestalt psychology and association psychology have been looking for the intrinsic nature of word meaning in the wrong directions. A word does not refer to a single object, but to a group or to a class of objects. Each word is therefore already a generalization. Generalization is a verbal act of thought and reflects reality in quite another way than sensation and perception reflect it. Such a qualitative difference is implied in the proposition that there is a dialectical leap not only between total absence of consciousness (in inanimate matter) and sensation but also between sensation and thought. (Ibid., p. 6).**

At the beginning of this quote Vygotsky specifically mentions the limits of contemporary psychology regarding word meaning. It is my opinion that in doing so, Vygotsky clearly refers us back to his quote in *The Psychology of Art* where he talks about the 'theory from antiquity' Classical Indian theories have a lot to say on word-meaning specifically. Once again the text leaves itself open to the interpretive process of the reader. Vygotsky's comments have made me make a mental note to re- read Bhartṛhari to get a clear idea on what he has to say on word-meaning and generalization, and between sensation and thought. Vygotsky's observation is that generalization is a verbal act of thought and reflects reality in a different way than sensation and perception.

> **There is every reason to suppose that the qualitative distinction between sensation and thought is the presence in the latter of a generalized reflection of reality, which is also the essence of word meaning; and consequently that meaning is an act of thought in the full sense of the term. But at the same time, meaning is an inalienable part of word as such, and thus belongs in the realm of language as much as in the realm of**

> **thought. A word without meaning is an empty sound, no longer a part of human speech. Since word meaning is both thought and speech, we find in it the unit of verbal thought we are looking for. Clearly then the method to follow in our exploration of the nature of verbal thought is semantic analysis-the study of the development, the functioning, and the structure of this unit, which contains thought and speech interrelated. This method combines the advantages of analysis and synthesis, and it permits adequate study of complex wholes. (Ibid)**

I do remember though, that it has been said that the Indian approach to the study of language and linguistic problems has been characterized by both analysis and synthesis. The Mimāmsa school of thought used both of these in their methodology when it came to textual interpretation of ancient texts. Moreover, curiously enough when Vygotsky says**,**

> **A word without meaning is an empty sound, no longer a part of human speech" it so much resonates with Bhartṛhari's distinction of śabda, artha and nāda. Verbal thought, the way Vygotsky describes it, seems very much like Madhyāmikā *vāk*, where artha – meaning – gets attached to the word. Vygotsky's comments make me wish I were more knowledgeable in Bhartṛhari's theory in order to carry the arguments further.**
>
> **Leo Tolstoy in his educational writings, says that children often have difficulty in learning a new word not because of its sound, but because of the concept to which the word refers: There is a word available nearly always when the concept has matured. Therefore, we all have reasons to consider word meaning not only as a union of thought and speech, but also as a union of generalization and communication, thought and communication. The conception of word meaning as a unit of both generalizing thought and social interchange is of incalculable value for the study of thought and language. It permits true causal-genetic analysis, systematic study of the relations between the growth of the child's thinking ability and his social development. The interrelation of generalization and communication may be considered a secondary focus of our study (Ibid., pp. 8-9).**

As mentioned before, like Bhartṛhari*,* Vygotsky's focus is also more on word meaning than levels of speech.

Speaking of Tolstoy reminds me of Gandhi. To an Indian mind, Gandhi and Tolstoy are two giant figures who represent the spirit of non-violence and freedom. I

have recently read Tolstoy's *Letter to an Indian*. I was astonished to know how deeply Tolstoy was acquainted with and influenced by Indian thought. His letter is infused with quotations from *The Bhagavad Gita*, generally referred to as the *Gita*. The *Gita* is the text, which contains the essence of the knowledge of consciousness found in Vedic literature. Talking of Tolstoy and the *Gita* reminds me of Humbolt. Had Vygotsky read Humbolt's writing on *Man in the realm of spirit*? In these writings Humbolt gives his interpretation of the *Gita*. My imaginative mind is putting it all together: *Gita* - *consciousness* - *action* - *reality* – the interpretation of a theory and its relation to history as well as to an individual's own life philosophy. In his letter to his student, Levina, Vygotsky states:

> Of course you cannot live without spiritually giving meaning to life. Without philosophy (your own, personal, life philosophy) there can be nihilism, cynicism, suicide, but not life. But everybody has his philosophy of course. Apparently you have to grow in it yourself, to give it space inside yourself, because it sustains life in us.
> (van der veer & Valsiner, 1993, p.16)

I wish it were possible to know more about Vygotsky's life and philosophy. Perhaps there is a reason why he named his daughter 'Gita'.

Conclusion

The above selections from Vygotsky serve only as examples of how the text initially engaged me, and the direction my thoughts took, and the direction they led me, evident in the few above quotes from Bhartrhari and the ones that follow. Readers may find many other selections from Vygotsky's book more engaging and meaningful if they were to undertake the immense task of comparing Vygotsky and Bhartṛihai's thought. I myself, on later readings, found passages I would have liked to explore further. For

example, Vygotsky's distinction between two different forms of consciousness – "intellectual consciousness" and "perceptual consciousness" (1997, p.26), and how this distinction relates to the Indian concept of jñana (all kinds of cognition true or false) and *pramā* (true cognition based on pratyaksa – which could be translated as *perception*); or how it relates to lower and higher levels of consciousness (savikalpa and nirvikalpa states of consciousness). Chethimattam explains that Indian philosophers look at consciousness from two levels – the empirical level and the transcendental level. In their inquiry into reality, philosophers in the Vedic tradition give importance to the pramānas, or the methods and means of right knowledge: these are, pratyakşha – perception; anumān – inference; and śabda – verbal testimony. All these belong to the empirical level of consciousness. These means on the empirical level are considered necessary for a realization of reality on the transcendental level. There is therefore, an integration of the empirical and the transcendental levels. This capacity for integration is a special feature of the approach from consciousness. Within Indian thought there is, in other words, an integration of the higher and the lower levels of consciousness, and at the same time a unity of the individual and the world (Chethimattam, 1971, p. 92). I am left wondering whether 'integration' within the Indian philosophic context, and 'development' within Vygotsky's terminology, have different or comparable meanings; however, such comparisons are not within the scope of my paper.

My attempt in this section has been a reflection of my reading process mirroring my understanding of the subject as it stood then, with many questions and a search for answers.

The above quotations from Vygotsky allow the reader to engage in an act of interpretive self-reflection. The gaps and the ambiguities open the text to the possibility of the construction of a virtual text where the knower, the known and the process of knowing merge, thus marking new parameters for the context within which Vygotsky is conventionally presented. In the following chapter I search for a 'global perspective' on Vygotsky, as an alternative to the 'Eurocentric' point of view which places him strictly within a European context.

Chapter 3
Perspective on Vygotsky

Placing Vygotsky within a Global Perspective

Vygotsky is credited with the rewriting of psychology in the USSR. He is generally viewed as a psychologist and is placed strictly within a European perspective. In my readings however, I was looking for an alternative perspective - one that would place him within a global setting. It would also provide the space to explore a series of contacts from Vygotsky to Bakhtin, Potebnya, Humbolt, Cassier, Stcherbatsky, the neo-Kantians, German and Russian Indologists, Saussure, and through them, classical Indian thought and perhaps Bhartṛhari. However, I did not find any readings, which looked beyond a European perspective. The tracings of influences stop at, and never cross the European circle within which the web of influences are contained. In this respect my reading excursion into the life and thought of Vygotsky was a rude awakening to the realities, subtleties and the power of the intellectual and academic world, and to the intense struggle among and between individuals, institutions and cultures to claim authorship of ideas. This seems to be a rather strong statement but it is not entirely unsupported. Consider what Valsiner and van der Veer say in the preface to their book *Understanding Vygotsky: A Quest for Synthesis*,

> Researching this book has been an exercise in detective work. Repeatedly we came across alterations to the history of Vygotsky's work in psychology—sometimes deliberate sometimes unintentional. Not surprisingly, we reacted vehemently to each unsubstantiated myth, and the reader will sense reactions in a number of places in the book. On reflection we wonder why we were so agitated when we discovered ways in which Vygotsky has been painted as a "guru" figure of Soviet (and some international) psychology. (1993, p.*x*).

I was looking for evidence in Vygotsky's writings to connect Vygotsky to Indian thought. However, finding such evidence raised even more questions and involved me further in the process of interpretation. Let us take, as an example of a gap in my understanding, the following paragraph from Vygotsky's *The Psychology of Ar*t, from which I have quoted in the last chapter.

> The first and most widespread formula of art psychology goes back to W. von Humboldt; it defines art as perception. Potebnia adopted this as the basic principle in a number of his investigations. In a modified form, it approaches the widely held theory that comes to us from antiquity, according to which art is the perception of, wisdom and teaching and instruction are its main tasks. One of the fundamental views of this theory is the analogy between the activity and evolution of language and art. (1925)

Note where he says, 'comes to us from antiquity'. I wonder which antiquity he is talking about – the European or the Eastern. If Vygotsky is linking it (the theory) to Humbolt and Potebnia then the Indian inheritance is very clear; but, almost as a contradiction, there is no mention of Indian thought in his text *Thought and Language* nor in the scholarly literature on Vygotsky. Yet both Humbolt and Potebyna were Sanskrit scholars and very well acquainted with classical Indian theories; and, as stated in chapter 2 the other sentences in the paragraph also reveal their affinity with the Indian philosophical tradition. So, what should the reader assume? These ambiguities have to be resolved for the reading process to continue. As a reader, I was presented with a tension, a number of intriguing questions, and a search for an alternative perspective as well as grounds for its validity. In my readings on Vygotsky, I was searching for a perspective which might have explored the link between Vygotsky and the theory, which comes to us from antiquity.

My motivation for pursuing this line of research also rests on the belief that, away from the rational world, is the world of intuitions and feelings, a world of inner reality. I was curious to find out what investigating an inner, intuitive feeling would reveal. The conventional representation of Vygotsky, which places him within a strictly European context, was in contradiction with the self of this reader.

In exploring an alternative perspective I involved myself in the creation of a virtual text. Its temporary contours might bring together the self of the reader and that of the author through the text, and in doing so reconstruct the context. In the previous chapter, I explored selections of Vygotsky's text, which contributed to the interpretive process of the reader. At these instances where the text and the reader meet, meaning takes a new turn and new contexts become established, because contexts, like meanings, cannot be limited or contained; it is perspective, which defines them.

In this section I cover the most important perspectives on Vygotsky to show that even they place him only within a European context. In general, I found that I could categorize the literature on Vygotsky into four broad areas:

1. Perspectives which compare Vygotsky's ideas with recent movements in Cognitive Science

2. Those, which consider Vygotsky's ideas to be based on Marx's ideas

3. Research, which deals with Vygotsky's biography and explores the philosophic and intellectual influences on him

4. Works that deal with the development and explanation of Vygtosky thought

To these different approaches to Vygotsky and his thought, I would like to add a fifth, my own, which seeks to place Vygotsky within a global perspective.

From the vast amount of literature available on Vygotsky, my few selections below serve only as examples of the conventional practice of placing Vygotsky within the European context. There is little doubt in my mind that, though there is so much more I could read on Vygotsky, I would find no explicit evidence linking Vygotsky to Classical Indian Thought. I am left to the interpretive experiences of the self to read between the lines and infer such connections. For argument's sake, I want to explore the possibility that each of the four perspectives could be expanded from the context within which they represent Vygotsky and his ideas.

Four Perspectives on Vygotsky

1. Perspectives which compare Vygotsky's ideas with Cognitive Science

Scholars like Phillips, Shelly; and Cole and Werstch, indicate parallels between Vygotsky and Western Developmental Cognitive Psychology. Indian scholars like S. C. Kak, indicate that recent research regarding studies of consciousness, is looking at correlations with emerging insights of cognitive science and classical Indian thought. This connection of both Vygotsky and Classical Indian thought to cognitive science could be passed off as mere coincidence, or the triangular relationship of Cognitive science. Vygotsky, and Indian thought could be investigated further within the sphere of consciousness studies, thus widening the horizons of each to establish a global perspective.

2. Views which consider Vygotsky's ideas to be based on Marx's ideas

One example of such work is by Fred Newman and Lois Holzman. However, though Vygotsky was influenced by Marxist ideas, unlike these ideas, he gave more

importance to ‘speech’ (Valsiner & van der Veer 1993: 204; 226). Further, Holzman and Newman, who consider Vygotsky’s ideas to be based on Marx’s dialectical conception of revolutionary activity, say:

> Vygotsky was searching for the “proper unit of study” for psychology, trying to free himself from both the linear, casual, dualistic Western psychological paradigm that was emerging and also from fastly rigidifying Marxist dialectics….For Vygotsky, development does not happen to us- from the inside, from the outside, or from any combination of inside outside. He rejected the inside outside dichotomy that has been a part of psychology since its beginnings. He also rejected the linear conception of progress and dynamic conception of process necessary to explain the’ relationship’ between inside and outside. He gave us a radically new conception of growth and psychological change….Vygotsky understood that a new unit of study required a new method of study, more precisely a new conception of method…Vygotsky wants us to see the totality, the whole, the unity…the interrelationships within it. (Holzman, n.d.)

This quote emphasizes some key elements in Vygotsky’s theory such as unity, totality, interrelationships, and the rejection of a linear conception of progress. According to Valsiner and van der Veer (1993) Vygotsky wanted to create a new methodology, but not in complete accordance with the Marxist thinkers; his method was only partially based on Marxist thinking. Marxism, as I understand from reading Valsiner and van der Veer, was not able to reconcile Vygotsky’s views on evolution and the human and animal intellect. According to Valsiner and van der Veer (1993), Vygotsky notes two opposing views in animal psychology:

- The view that animals are totally different from human beings, a view defended by Descartes and behaviourism, and
- The view that animals are not basically different from humans, Darwin belonged to the latter camp.

Neither of these views was acceptable to Vygotsky who was looking for an evolutionary, genetic, account. His view was that there are basic differences between animals and human-beings and this difference rested on the role of speech in the on-set of human culture.

I raise the point about the significance of the theory of evolution because we do not know whether or not Vygotsky's basic assumptions regarding the theory of evolution have any correlations with the theory of evolution within the classical Indian tradition of thought. Once again my attempt has been to broaden the horizon and establish a dialogue between the East and the West.

3. Research, which explores the biographic, philosophic and intellectual influences on Vygotsky

Cited below are three sources which serve as examples to demonstrate that a discussion on the intellectual influences on Vygotsky never explores the boundaries beyond Humbolt or Potebyna. Exploring the linguistic sources and philosophic influences on Vygotsky, Tatiana N. Naumora focuses on the linguistic sources of Vygotsky's *Thought and Language* and traces the unification of psychology and linguistics in Russia. Her focus is on Russian Linguistics in general, and she emphasizes the influences of Potebnya and Humbolt on Vygotsky's thought. (Naumora, 1993, pp. 343-349) According to Morato, Vygotsky's reflections on the semiological properties between language and cognition have a resemblance to the writings of Humbolt; M. Bakhtin; E. Benvenista 1; and C. Franchi (Morato, 2000, pp. 149-165). Once again there appears to be no attempt or a need to explore beyond Humbolt.

Van der Veer and Valsiner (1993), give detailed accounts of the intellectual milieu within which Vygotsky's theory was formulated. Exploring the intricate details of the

intellectual influences on Vygotsky, they state that their approach is "an archeology of ideas" (van der Veer & Valsiner, 1993). Summing up the influences, the authors conclude that Vygotsky's thought presents a synthesis of evolutionary and zoopsychological ideas together with Hegelian-Engelsian-Marxian notions of history.

It is not necessary to go into the details of the arguments because none of the above mentioned sources answers the question about the influence of Indian thought on Vygotsky. However, after reading Valsiner and van der Veer, I felt that their work was important from one very significant aspect. In articulating the details of the intellectual influences on Vygotsky and contrasting the limitations of the prevalent theories in the West with Vygotsky's own assumptions and presuppositions, these scholars chronicle the stages that scientific progress in the West had reached at that time. Perhaps Vygotsky's theory was not just a synthesis of the scientific theories of the West but an exploration or realization and acceptance of their limits: 'review and replacement' as Vygotsky himself says, by seeking alternatives. So my search continued. Perhaps, I thought, things might get clearer by understanding more about Vygotsky thought, its development and its main ideas.

4. Vygotsky through his theory.

The fourth perspective looks at Vygotsky through his theory. Here the views presented by Werstch and Veresov are foremost. Werstch presents the American point of view, and Veresov, the Russian.

In his account of Vygotsky's theory, Werstch (1985) identifies three general themes: the genetic method; the claim that higher mental processes have their origin in the social processes; and the claim that mental processes can be understood only if we understand

the tools and signs that mediate them. Werstch recognizes the interconnectedness of these three themes but believes that Vygotsky's most important contribution was the concept of mediation. According to Vygotsky's genetic method all higher mental functions first appear on the interpsychological plane and then on the intrapsychological plane, and semiotic mediation makes the transition from intrapsychological to interpsychological functioning possible. In connection with this theory, Vygotsky analyses some important concepts, like inner speech, egocentric speech, word meaning, and word sense. Arguing that the semiotic process was a part of both the individual and the social, Vygotsky sought to bridge the gap between the individual and the social.

According to Werstch, as mentioned above, the most important and unique contribution of Vygotsky is the concept of mediation. The evolution of Vygotsky's thinking, says Werstch, reveals a switch from an account of mediational means tied to Pavlovian psychophysiology, to one giving importance to meaning. The concept of sign becomes central for Vygotsky's theory. Vygotsky's insights into the nature of meaning in sign systems laid the groundwork for interpreting the genetic relationship between social and individual processes. The semiotic system is interpreted as a part of both the social and the individual, therefore making it possible to bridge the gap between them. According to Werstch, Vygotsky's understanding of this relationship is the core of his approach.

Werstch states that there are two important points in Vygotsky's analysis of mediation. The first is that Vygotsky expanded Engel's notion of tools to "psychological tools" or "signs". He noted fundamental differences between technical tools and

psychological tools, or signs. According to Vygotsky, technical tools are directed towards the external world, it is a means of our external activity to control nature. A sign or a psychological tool is directed towards internal activity; it is a means for psychologically influencing behavior. Therefore, psychological tools alter the flow and structure of human behavior. They do not simply facilitate, but also have the capacity to transform mental functioning.

The second point is that, by nature, psychological tools are social and not individual. Psychological tools such as language, counting systems, mnemonic techniques, etc. are social because they are the products of socio-cultural evolution; they are not invented by individuals, and they are not instincts or unconditional reflexes. Individuals appropriate these mediational means. Moreover, psychological tools are a part of the dynamics of social interaction, and face-to-face communication as well. However, according to Werstch:

> No other aspect of Vygotsky's work has been as consistently ignored or misinterpreted by psychologists as his semiotic analysis and the intellectual forces that gave rise to it. To understand the origins and nature of Vygotsky's ideas on this topic, one must look elsewhere – in particular, to the figures in semiotica, linguistics, and poetics that influenced him….The dominant force in literary criticism and linguistics in the USSR at the time Vygotsky was writing was Russian formalism… Russian formalism helped determine the problems Vygotsky investigated and the methods he used to investigate them. Vygotsky was led to focus on issues that might not be considered in another time and place. (1985, pp. 81-82)

In his explanation of the above, Werstch rejects the idea that Vygotsky was influenced by Pavlov in formulating his ideas of mediation. Rather, he traces the influences to semiotics, linguistics, poetics and Russian formalists. What if one explores these areas seriously? Even a casual thought connects these areas with the structuralist revolution

and with comparative linguistics, which indicates a connection with Saussure and Humbolt. This is where most European scholars stop. For a truly global perspective we need to go beyond Saussure, beyond Humbolt, to that presence which hangs as the silent consciousness of so much in western scholarship.

Even in looking at Veresov, which we will do now, the perspective does not change. Veresov, in his article 'Vygotsky before Vygotsky', states,

> …because the previous stages of Vygotsky's theoretical work have not been investigated well, there are misunderstandings and mistakes not only to the interpretation of the previous periods of Vygotsky's work and to the explanation of the theoretical positions he followed "on the road to his discovery", but to the interpretation of the cultural-historical theory itself. (Veresov, n.d.)

Veresov criticizes the approaches of Werstch, van der Veer and Valsiner, as well as those of Leont'ev, Minick and Das. He states that these scholars do not reflect the theoretical evolution of Vygotsky's thought. As a result, one does not get a true sense of a continuity related to the development of Vygotsky's thought. According to Veresov,

> The idea of mediation, the concept of the zone of proximal development, the idea of the development of theoretical concepts were all steps, fragments, and concrete applications of his (Vygotsky's) main ideas of the socio-cultural origins of the problem. (Ibid.)

Veresov calls the development of theoretical foundation and the steps, periods and phases of that development one of the "hidden" lines of Vygotsky's work. This line, he says, cannot be ignored. Veresov asserts that the cultural-historical theory was developed in answer to the crisis in psychology, and Vygotsky was trying to find a new approach to the study of psychology. What Vygotsky searched for was the objective scientific theory of human consciousness on the basis of consecutive monism. The problem, says Veresov, is to understand why he tried to find a new way – what the general task was to

which traditional classical psychology could not give an adequate solution. This general problem is presented by Veresov through the three key words –consciousness, monism, and objectivity. Veresov applies this idea as the basis for the methodological analysis of the development of the main ideas presented by Vygotsky in his cultural-historical theory.

A summary of Veresov's text is as follows:

Veresov considers Vygotsky primarily as a psychologist of consciousness. He says that there was a dramatic theoretical evolution in Vygotsky's views on consciousness and its nature, and therefore, in different periods of his scientific work, Vygotsky discovered and even defined consciousness as a psychological problem from different, opposite, and contrary theoretical positions. Veresov, through his methodological-historical approach, explores Vygotsky's multidimensional world and more specifically, Vygotsky's evolution on the way to the cultural-historical theory of the development of human consciousness. Through the study of the pre-history of the cultural historical theory, Veresov states that some of the ideas attributed to this theory were worked out before the theory itself, but on different theoretical models. Veresov says he seeks to discover and reconstruct the content of these theoretical models, and trace the logic of the occurrence of the main notions and concepts and thus of the origin of the cultural-historical theory itself. He concentrates on the period from 1917 to 1927, which he calls the "dark phase" in Vygotsky's creative evolution.

Veresov identifies three theoretical models of human consciousness in Vygotsky's

writings: the reflexological (1917-1927); the behaviouristic-structural (1925-1927); and the cultural-historical (1928-1934). These models correspond to the three stages of development regarding Vygotsky's ideas on consciousness: (1) consciousness as the reflex of reflexes; (2) consciousness as the structure of the human behaviour; and (3) consciousness as the unit of meaning and sense.

In his article, Veresov presents two theoretical models of human consciousness: the reflexological (1917-1934); and the behaviouristic-structural (1925-1927). To reconstruct these models Veresov investigates

1. The terminological apparatus and the corpus of notions and concepts,
2. The types of analysis of consciousness and
3. The explanatory principles, their merits and limits that forced Vygotsky to change them in different stages of his work.

Having given a summary of the ideas discussed by Veresov, my intent here is not to enter into detailed discussion of Veresov's ideas but to look for points of departure which would give an opportunity to expand on the horizon of Vygotsky's ideas as presented in his text, *Thought and Language*. Does Veresov provide such an opening? Perhaps he does but in an indirect and unintentional way.

According to Veresov, the "philosophical conceptions" of the Ukranian linguist A. Potebyna, and the ideas presented in Vygotsky's *Psychology of Art* (1925), were later developed in Vygotsky's text *Thought and Language*. *Psychology of Art* is one of the important works of Vygotsky written before 1924, in which Vygotsky specifically refers to Potebyna, Humbolt and Indian thought concerning language and word-meaning. The

philosophical ideas of Potebyna need to be analyzed critically because of the fact that Potebyna himself was a Sanskrit scholar and worked closely with Humbolt. One has to look for chance references like these because there is not much information on Vygotsky – especially as it relates to the early years of his research which is called the 'dark period' of his life. In highlighting this importance, Veresov links the development of the main ideas of Vygotsky's cultural-historical theory to the philosophical ideas of Potebyna and those contained in the *Psychology of Art,* and therefore, indirectly to Indian thought. It is this connection which interests me; exploring such a connection might help in widening the perspective on Vygotsky.

Exploring a Genealogical Perspective on Vygotsky

To explore a genealogical perspective on Vygotsky I have to take into account the fact that the main influences on the development of Vygotsky's thought - i.e. Humbolt, Potebyna and Saussure (if we take the structuralist movement into account) – are all connected to Indian thought. To put such a connection within a framework, I tried to understand Vygotsky's thought at two levels:

1. The level which deals with specific empirical investigations; and
2. The generalities or the philosophical grounds of his specific ideas.

At one level, Vygotsky's cultural-historical theory gives an account of the origin and development of the Western educated adult. At the other level, and again according to Valsiner and van der Van, his theory is a "general theory of man":

> In general …his (Vygotsy's) theory is the theory of man, man's origin and evolution to the present day. The image of man is as a rational being taking

> control of his own destiny and emancipating himself from nature's restrictive bonds. (Valsiner and van der Van, 1993)

To my Indian consciousness, Vygotsky's ideas regarding the general theory of man appeared to be very similar to the Vedantic concept of man. Man, according to Vedantism, frees himself from the bondage of Prakriti, (nature) through knowledge. According to ancient Indian thought, knowledge is of two kinds, the lower and the higher. The lower is of the intellect, the higher of the supreme consciousness – the Brahman – and cultural life bridges the gap between the two (Sarma, 1908). In the formulations of its generalities, and the exploration of its specifics, lie the origin and the development of Vygotsky's ideas into a dominant theory. I argued to myself that perhaps the general ideas and the philosophical leanings, the presuppositions and assumptions of Vygotsky, could genealogically be traced and or linked to Indian thought. However, such speculation involves a weaving together of different strands of thoughts. These are represented in the following questions below:

What would we discover if we explored the roots and origins of Vygotsky's ideas with a 'genealogical' approach rather than an 'archaeological' one?

What were the prevalent theories of human consciousness during Vygotsky's time?

Could one find correlations between the cultural-historical theory, which is the theory of development of human consciousness and a theory of human consciousness?

At this point I would like to refer to Ramavatar Sarma's lectures on Vedantism (1908) in order to explore possible answers to the questions posed above, and, at the same time, to present Indian theory as an alternative theory of human consciousness. I chose Sarma's lectures over numerous other readings because, first of all, they fall within Vygotsky's

times and therefore could be considered a part of the discourse of those times; and secondly, because I find in these lectures a similar view – especially with regard to Vygotsky's general theory of man. Moreover, I was particularly curious because Sarma translates the terms Sattva*,* Rajas, and Tamas as consciousness*,* action and reality specifically – something I had not encountered in any of my other readings. This usage reminded me of Vygotsky's use of the same terms in *Thought and Language*.

Before I look at some basic concepts of Vedantic thought as a possible alternative theory of consciousness, I would like to add that according to Kozulin, Vygotsky, was interested in investigating the relations between the three terms consciousness*,* activity and reality*;* but neither Vygotsky nor Kozulin, nor the literature on Vygotsky, mentions directly or indirectly or even tries to trace the origin of these terms, which I think, may fall into the category of 'conceptual terms'. Conceptual terms as I understand are theory-specific and culture-specific. Neither did I find any speculation on a line of inquiry that it could be possible that Vygotsky took Indian psychology seriously. Perhaps such a line of inquiry is of no importance to the Eurocentric point of view; but coming across these terms in Vygotsky presented a crisis to me. Was Vygotsky playing with the readers' imagination, and was the creation of this gap intentional on Vygotsky's part? It would not be so unusual to find in Vygotsky's text terms and concepts from the Indian tradition of thought if we consider what the authors G.M. Bongard-Levin & A.A. Vegasin have to say regarding Indian studies in Russia. According to them, the Russian approach to the study of India was different from the rest of Europe; unlike their European counter-parts, the Russian intellectuals gave serious attention to the scientific potential of Indian

thought. Bongard-Levin and Vegasin state, “Indian terms, names and images gained widespread usage and spread in scientific and publistic works and fiction of the day” (1984, p. 145).

Now to resume the discussion on Vedanta, Sarma’s two major works are, *Sanskrit Lexiography* (1923) and his philosophic work *Paramārthadarshan (1994).* In the introduction of Sarma’s *Paramārthadarshan (1994),* it is stated that his philosophy is considered to be non-dualistic – Vedanta minus its religion, theology, and asceticism. For Sarma, the central theme of Indian philosophy is the question of the unity of being or experience. His ethical ideal is living freedom gained from critical self-inquiry. Knowledge liberates one from Māyā*,* i.e. the bondage of ego (or prakṛiti - nature). Liberation means the acquisition of wisdom while living and this wisdom is understood as active wisdom (Pandeya, 1994, pp. v-xvii).

The following are from Sarma's ‘Lectures on Vedantism –1908’, and the extended quotes very briefly present some of the main ideas of Vedantic philosophy as interpreted by Sarma:

> Vedantism presents critical thought in India. It established the permanent non-dualistic character of the concrete reality…and acknowledges both the scientific and the philosophic point of view…. The evolution of thought gradually expands our horizon and we move from a lower to a higher standpoint towards freedom. This higher standpoint is impartial, universal and rational….Vedantisam is a philosophy of immanency but not in the Spinozistic sense…it combines the Cartesian and the Hegelian arguments on the Ontological proof of the existence of God…and rejects Cartesian dualism….The real Vedantic theory is neither subjective idealism nor materialism but transcends both and reconciles them….It is the doctrine of the Sākshin. Sāksin is pure knowledge. This knowledge is non-dualistic, eternal, perfect and infinite. The reality of Sakshin is self-witnessed infinite series of moments (like waves in the ocean). The Sākshin unfolds itself by and by. There is an evolution of our thoughts. Never at any moment is our thought something quite different from what it was in a previous one. There is the essential unity of knowledge…and reality is an objective force, which cannot

> be ignored. There is the primacy of fact….Whatever the origin of knowledge its final demonstration lies in its own truth….Methods (of gaining knowledge): knowledge is of two kinds. Presentation and representation; a combination of the two is accepted by Vedantism. The two are intertwined. Perception and inference are considered as part of Presentation. Perception is considered important because it is both a source of knowledge and demonstrative evidence. These methods of gaining knowledge are interdependent….Our knowledge is helped by language. Thought and language go hand in hand….Experience in a critical sense is the final authority. Experience consists of critical self-examination. The ordinary thought has no rest….A Vedantin is totalistic in everything…… (Sarma, 1908)

I have diverged into some general aspects of Indian thought here primarily because reading about Vygotsky made me search for an understanding of Indian thought. Trying to understand Vygotsky was addressing a dual problem: one of understanding Vygotsky, and the other of finding out whether my thoughts made sense.

My perspective, of seeing Vygotsky outside of the strictly European context, assumes a semblance of virtuality if we focus on the theory of Sphoṭa*,* which deals with such specific concepts like, word meaning, levels of speech, sequence in external language and the difference between sound and meaning. In ancient India, this concept of Sphoṭa was developed into a theory of Sphoṭa by the Grammarian school of thought. Murti says, the Grammar School advanced the Doctrine of Sphoṭa – the Unitary Whole Word particularly the Akhaṇda-Vākyartha-Sphoṭa—that the sentence is an indivisible unit whole. And this engenders meaning (Murti, 1986). It is my suggestion, that Vygotsky's investigations and explorations on the relation of thought and speech be considered an extension of the theory of Sphoṭa*,* as developed by the Grammarian philosophers, specifically Bhartṛhari. My speculation is that with Vygotsky, the theory of Sphoṭa crossed cultural boundaries. Theories and thoughts do travel. The contact of cultures and exchange of ideas is a universal and a continuous process that is, perhaps,

heightened at certain times in history. Can the philosophic and scientific be isolated from such influences? Taking a genealogical view, the development of the theory of Sphoṭa could be shown as follows:

1. The concept of sphoṭa can be traced back to the vedic period, to the mystical meditation of the Vedic ṛiśis - 4,000---c1, 000 BCE.
2. Pātañjali provides the initial framework for the s*phoṭa* theory, (150 AD).
3. Definition of sphoṭa by Bhartṛhari (450 AD) in his work – the V*ākyapadiya.* Bhartṛhari gives a systematic philosophical analysis with illustrations of Word knowledge manifested and communicated in ordinary experience.
4. Logical analysis by Mandana Misra in his work - *Sphoṭasiddhi (690 AD).* Mandan Misra elaborates Bhartṛhari's theory.
5. Scientific experimentation by Vygotsky in his work, *Thought and Language* (1934). Vygotsky tests it empirically.

The theory of Sphoṭa is discussed in greater detail in the next section:

> The word or sentence is an indivisible unity that is inherently given and engenders all meaning. The separate letters of a word or words of the sentence merely manifest the sphoṭa, or meaning-whole. In Madhava's Sarva-Darşana-Samgraha, the argument is put in this way...as the letters cannot cause the cognition of the meaning, there must be a sphoṭa by means of which arises the knowledge of the meaning: and this sphota is an eternal (inner) sound distinct from the letters and revealed by them, which causes the cognition of the meaning? (Coward, 1986, p. 66).

The original concept of this theory can be traced back to the Vedic period of Indian thought. Harold Coward states,

> Bhartṛhari may have modeled his concept of the sphoṭa on the vedic praṇava but his method was different. Rather than immersing himself in mystical meditation, he sets out to analyze the meaning of words and the means by which such word knowledge is manifested and communicated in ordinary experience…(1971, p. 36).

Vygotsky, modeling his concept on 'the theory from antiquity' sets about investigating it empirically, with Western methods. Placing Vygotsky within this perspective might address the lacunas present in understanding the development of Vygotsky's theory.

Because of lack of direct evidence, it could be argued that the genealogical framework presented above is a speculation, bordering the myth. However, finding facts, direct, indirect or circumstantial, as they emerge and merge into new possibilities, fusing the process of reading with the result, and as such, blurring the boundaries between fact and fiction contributes towards the creation of the 'virtual text'. The virtual extension of the text is the sandhyā bhāsā, the hidden language of the myths, the twilight language of a text. Within this context, as part of the reading process, it is a logical extension of the reader's role in the act of interpretation.

Conclusion

In this section, I looked at the literature on Vygotsky according to the following four categories:

1. Perspectives which compare Vygotsky's ideas with recent movements in cognitive Science
2. Those, which consider Vygotsky's ideas to be based on Marx's ideas
3. Research, which deals with Vygotsky's biography and explores the philosophical and intellectual influences on him
4. Works that deal with the development and explanation of Vygtosky thought

In the end I presented my perspective of placing Vygotsky within a wider, global perspective, giving reasons that each one of the conventional perspectives could, at different points within their arguments, be made to add another dimension to make them truly multidimensional.

To summarize, Valsiner and van der Veer's synthesis could include a synthesis of the traditions of the East and the West; the Marxist arguments made less rigid by

considering the Indian theories of evolution; the intellectual and philosophical influences on Vygotsky could go beyond Humbolt and Potebyna; and lastly when looking at Vygotsky's thought perhaps the contribution of linguistics, philosophy and Russian Formalism be adequately researched in an unbiased way. In other words, Van der Veer & Valsiner's archaeology of ideas could be contrasted by exploring a genealogy of ideas. Werstch's comment on the neglect and misinterpretation of intellectual forces that gave rise to the important concept of mediation could be followed up by further research on the linguistic sources and philosophic influences to include such sources in all their aspects, and Veresov's identification of the three key words – consciousness*,* monism, and objectivity could be explored within a wider cultural context perhaps by drawing a contrast with other competing theories on consciousness and how they deal with these concepts. Finally, I presented an outline of a genealogical perspective.

My effort has been to find a way to go beyond William Jones and Max Mueller the 'arc-Orientalists', as Houben calls them; to go beyond colonialism, imperialism, and Eurocentricism. Perhaps one could arrive at a cross-cultural dialogue with an understanding that frees and does not bind. Most of all I was able to put my own interest in establishing a dialogue between Bhartṛhari and Vygotsky into perspective. Houben states:

> It is very important to gain more comprehensive knowledge of how thinkers in the past collected and theorized the data available to them. These thinkers of the past are not just providers of new data for our theories; they also become – perhaps first of all – partners in a dialogue… in order to be able to deal successfully with new challenges in philosophy and human sciences, it is important to maintain and make use of, a rich reservoir of idea-o-diversity. It is important to remain open to different perspectives on basic philosophical and human problems, and the past – especially also the past of South Asia –

> has conserved a great variety of powerful perspectives in seed form for us. (1997, p. 1)

He further indicates:

> We have no more a monolithic reality in a simple and straightforward relation with a truthful statement. Reality has become a landscape of which different persons may have quite distinct but equally valid perceptions. Although one may try to arrive at a perception of the landscape which transcends the individual difference, any concrete perception needs a perceiver located at some point in or near the landscape. This approach to reality, rationality and truth can be called perspectivisitic in that it acknowledges beforehand the validity of different perspectives on a given issue (Houben, 1997, p. 3).

In the next chapter I look at significance of the involvement of the West with the East, the impact of which has yet to be fully realized by scholars.

Chapter 4
Echoes of the East

Reasons for investigating European involvement with the East

Once again, realizing that I was reading Vygotsky's *Thought and Language* very differently compared to other students in the class, and that there was nothing to be found in terms of comparative studies on Bhartṛhari and Vygotsky, it was clear I would have to find my own path trying to understand and synthesize two culturally different approaches to the study of the relationship of language, thought, and reality. To get some understanding of Vygotsky's thought and his cultural embeddedness I needed to know more about Vygotsky and about the discourse of his times.

In terms of Bhartṛhari, it was essential to get acquainted with the classical theoretical traditions of India and India's connections with the West, if one were to trace the migration of thought from the East to the West.

The scope is vast and my readings at times diffused, focusing on questions such as: Was there a possibility that Vygotsky had read Bhartṛhari? What were the influences on Vygotsky? Sometimes getting caught up in the debate on Imperialism versus Orientalism - How did Vygotsky view the primitive/colonial non-western people? Considering that St. Petersburg was one of the most important centres of Indological studies at that time, what impact did this have on the Russian intellectual community? What were the connections of Russian intellectuals from St. Petersburg with scholars in Germany, in

India? How did the British who ruled India in those times, look upon the Russian - Indian connections?

Related to my own experience of reading Vygotsky with some background knowledge of Bhartṛhari**,** these questions surfaced as a natural part of the reading process. Each set of questions led to further readings, and I discovered that the intimate relation between *language* and *thought* has been a topic of philosophic discussion for centuries within the Indian tradition. I also learnt that the 19th Century west is characterized by fervent activity in deciphering, translating and disseminating Asian texts through Indological studies, and, as having a fascination with advait-vedānta*,* one of the major philosophical traditions of India (Tuck, 1990, pp. 22-25).

Commenting on the times of Bakhtin and Vygotsky, Lemke says …

> He (Bakhtin) worked as part of a group of scholars in the period immediately following the Russian Revolution, a time when Marxist ideas were widely respected and when there was a temporary crack in the monolithic ideology of European culture. In this period, Vygotsky began to ask about the social origins of mind...” (1995, p. 22).

I wanted to find out more about “the temporary crack in the monolithic ideology of European culture”, and about “the period” when Vygotsky began to ask about the social origins of mind. This period characterizes Europe’s involvement with the East. My dialogue with Vygotsky then, became an attempt to discover and uncover the larger dialogue of the period: the meeting of the East and the West.

In this section I trace the important historical links in the European involvement with the East. History serves as a pointer; it indicates and makes us aware of the relationships between the elements of the image and ourselves. Iconicity and indexicality

are intertwined, they convolute, as do agents, events, things and time in relation to each other when we engage in interpretation. In this sense, history cannot be left behind. Such was my reasoning behind investigating this period in history.

First I will look at 19th century scholarship in the West and give a brief outline of European involvement with the East, specifically focusing on the interpretive practices of the West regarding ancient Indian texts and manuscripts. Then, I will explore the connection between India and Russia. During the 19th century, both India and Russia were experiencing revolutions. In Russia we read about the revolutions of 1905 and 1917. In India we have the First War of Independence - 1857; and the working of the nationalist movement, which led to the Independence of India in 1947. Intellectuals and revolutionaries in both countries drew strength and inspiration from each other. The comparison draws attention to the fact that, within interested circles what was happening in one country was being watched and studied by the other. Writings, both philosophical and scientific, cannot be separated from their times.

European involvement with the East and scholarship concerning Indic studies

At first, European interest in India was mainly commercial. The Dutch, the Portuguese and the British established colonies in parts of India. The British established the British East India Company in 1600 AD, and eventually were able to control almost the entire Indian peninsula. With the European presence in India, the missionary presence also grew. These missionaries were the first to discover and translate Sanskrit works into European languages, thus starting a scholarly interest in the study of Indian

culture and its literature. According to Tuck (1990), the first European Sanskrit scholar (1651) was a Dutch missionary-Abraham Roger, who published some of the works of Bhartṛhari, as well as a Book on Brahmanical texts, titled *Open Door to the Hidden Heathendom.* The first Sanskrit Grammar is also supposed to be written by a European Jesuit priest, Johann Ernest Hanxleden (1701). Charles Wilkins, an employee of the British East India Company, was the first Englishman who started compiling and translating Sanskrit texts.

Tuck comments that it is William Jones, the founder of the Asiatic Society of Bengal, however, who is acknowledged as the 'undisputed founder of Orientalism and as the man whose opened Sanskrit studies to the West (1990, p. 3). In 1786, Sir William Jones announced that study of the Sanskrit language held the key to the origins of the classical languages of the West and suggested that there were similarities as well as genealogical connections with Greek and Latin, Germanic, Celtic, and Persian languages, and classical Indian and Western mythologies. Jones helped establish Indian philosophy, Indian literature, and comparative philology as legitimate areas of inquiry, and Sanskrit language and Hindu culture became objects of extreme value (Ibid. p. 4).

This was the time when Friedrich Schlegel wrote his influential work, *Uber die Sparche and Weisheit der Indian*. His older brother had become the first professor of Sanskrit at the University of Bonn. In 1918, Franz Bopp published *Uber das Conjugations system der Sanskritsparche*, a systematic comparison of Sanskrit with German, Greek, and Latin for the purpose of illuminating the origin and basic structure

of all Indo-European languages. All these scholars were indebted to Jones for creating an intense interest in Europe, in Indian language and Indian culture.

Tuck (1990) mentions that European thought in the 18th and the 19th centuries was dominated by 'rationalism' which is described as being restricting and limited. In contrast, the study of Indian literature provided a source of liberation. Under the leadership of the Schlegel brothers, the German Romantic movement was responsible for starting the trend of the study of Indian literature. Around this time, translations of Sanskrit texts into European languages became a widespread European practice. According to Tuck there was a tendency in the 19th century to romanticize Indian literature, and to discover answers to European concerns and parallels with European thought. He gives the example of Schopenhauer:

> Schopenhaur's appropriation of the Upanishads for his own purposes was by no means an exception to common practice, though it is probably the most notorious. This practice was widespread and unquestioned. Throughout the 19th century, European scholars consistently grafted their own intellectual concerns and discursive practices onto an India that was virtually of their own creation and treated Indian texts as exotic expressions of their own presuppositions and philosophies. (1990, p. 7).

Tuck presents a slightly different argument than Said in the Orientalist debate. Said, according to Tuck, argues that Europe consistently pictured Asia as one of its recurring images of the Other, and that this view of the Orient helped define Europe (or the West) as its contrasting image, idea, personality, and experience. However, Tuck states:

> although it is true in many cases that Europeans have portrayed Asia as a dark, threatening, ultimately unknowable and anti-Europe, but it is equally true that the urge to find parallels, to see Asia as a mirror, has been at work, particularly among those scholars engaged in the translation and interpretation of ancient

> texts These professionals were interested in India not because it was culturally opposed to the West, but because they believed that the two cultures have the same linguistic and philosophic origins. (Ibid., p. 8).

To illustrate this point, Tuck refers to William Jones. In his book *Discourse on the Philosophy of The Asiatics,* William Jones asserted that there were linguistic philosophical and religious parallels linking Europe and Asia. Tuck says that it was not until the late 19th century that Indian philosophy was recognized as an independent subject for scholarly inquiry. According to Tuck, Indian philosophical study was a sub-discipline within Sanskrit studies, and this sub-discipline had a Kantian influence. 18th and 19th century German Idealism promoted Indian philosophical studies and the writings of this group of scholars on Indian texts are:

> Infused with Kantian and Hegelian terminology, neo-Kantian beliefs about the primacy of epistemology and the idealist concerns with transcendental truth. ….German idealism presented a lens through which the Indian philosophical tradition appeared to have been duplicating the latest discoveries of the great European thinkers. (Tuck, 1990, pp 17-18)

According to Tuck, the history of Indian philosophic studies is a history of "isogetic" interpretations (Ibid., p. 30). Tuck asserts that writers in the West were using Indian philosophical apparatus to solve Western philosophical problems and using Western philosophical language to re-describe ancient Indian philosophical concerns:

> European scholars have consistently looked in the Indian intellectual tradition for answers to Western philosophical problems. They have used European technical terminology in translations and analysis of Sanskrit texts… (Ibid., 1990, p. 10)

Could any of the above arguments be applied to Vygotsky's *Thought and Language?* More specifically, what were Vygotsky's connections with German idealism? With the

structuralist revolution? Saussure, the founder of modern structuralism and linguistics was also a professor of Sanskrit at the University of Geneva in the 1880's. Is it possible to speculate that Vygotsky took Indian psychology seriously enough to be tempted to test it empirically, and in that process found Western scientific investigations lacking a method to adequately test presuppositions of Classical Indian thought? Did he look for answers to methodological problems within psychology not only in the philosophy of Spinoza, but Vedanta as well? To answer my questions I had to look into what was happening within Russia.

Russia, Tolstoy and Gandhi

According to Isaiah Berlin, Russia at that time was "skeptical of the West, was disillusioned by the Western liberal and radical ideologies. Russian thinkers were looking for alternative answers" (1978). My question was, did they turn to the East in search of alternatives? Berlin mentions several intellectuals of that time including Tolstoy, who was one of the literary giants of that era whose influence cannot be overestimated. Three important themes of Tolstoy caught my attention: history, education, and spirituality. These three themes are tied to his search for truth and a desire for social change. Isaiah Berlin notes that in his journals, Tolstoy talks about his educational visits to the West, which included Britain and Germany, and speaks "forcefully" against the Western Education system. Tolstoy believed in social change through "spiritual", and "educational" means. Reading about Russia, the picture of the Russian society that emerges is of a society in chaos, with writers, intellectuals, and others involved in working for social reform. Those interested in social reform (although

there was opposition between the two groups), were Westernizers – a group of atheists and agnostics who took their convictions from liberal Western philosophers and revolutionary thinkers. They believed Russia could be saved only by the injection of Western ideas. The other group – the Slovaphils – opposed imitation of Western Europe. They stressed the ancient Indo-European sources of Slavic culture, claiming the Slavic languages as belonging to the same family, they emphasized the study of Sanskrit. It was in this intellectual and spiritual background, that Tolstoy's seniors, contemporaries and the generation which followed lived. Their world is described as:

> self-enclosed, desperately questioning, furiously rejecting world, obsessed with the great problems of the hour interminably discussing, intriguing, united only in impotent rejection of the status quo...(Cranshaw, 1974, pp. 97-98.)

If such was the state of affairs in Russia, it makes sense to speculate that some Russian intellectuals, reformists, and academicians seeking an alternative to the Westernizers, like the Slovophils, looked to the East for alternatives. Maxim Gorky, in *Reminiscences of Lev Nikolayevich' Tolstoy,* discloses that "He (Tolstoy) advised me to read Buddhist scriptures" (1920). References like this reveal Tolstoy's interest in the Orient.

In the 1880's Tolstoy wrote his philosophical work, A *Confession and What I Believe.* In this book, Tolstoy attacked the Russian Orthodox Church, and as a result, the Russian Orthodox Church excommunicated the author. This became a time of intense spiritual search for Tolstoy, and perhaps led to his becoming acquainted with Indian philosophers residing in the West. Tolstoy's teachings influenced Gandhi in India.

Gandhi's association with Tolstoy is well documented both within India and within Russia.

In his article on Gandhi, Komorav (1971) attempts to bring together the material available on Gandhi's attitude to revolutionary Russia. He states that, although a great deal has been written about Gandhi and his ideological kinship with Leo Tolstoy, his attitude to revolutionary Russia and its influence on him have not yet been discussed. Filled with numerous references and quotations, not only of the correspondence between Gandhi and Tolstoy but also from Gandhi's speeches and writings, the article analyzes Gandhi's reaction to the first Russian Revolution of 1905, and to the October Socialist Revolution of 1917, and provides an interesting link to the discourse of the period. Vafa, studies the influence of Gandhi's views and activities in the Soviet Union. He begins by saying that the study of Gandhi's views and activities is a deep-rooted tradition in their country, Russia. In view of widespread public interest in his personality and work, articles and other material about him have been published in the Soviet Union since the twenties, and these appeared not only in special scientific magazines but also in mass publications intended for broad public reading. Gandhi was also called "The Hindu Tolstoy" (Vafa, 1971, pp. 28-29).

From the Indian side, Dr. Nag explores the relationship between Gandhi and Tolstoy. In his book, *Tolstoy and Gandhi* (1950), Nag gives the Indian perspective. Nag relies on events told to him by Tolstoy's Russian Biographer- Paul Birukov. Nag says, it is now accepted, though not widely acknowledged, that Tolstoy was influenced, especially in his later life by the Eastern philosophies of Confucius, Buddhism, and the

Indian Scriptures, *Vedas*, *Upanishads*, and the *Gita*. The evidence of this is visible in Tolstoy's article, 'Letter to an Indian'. This writing by Tolstoy was later translated into several Indian languages and distributed throughout India by Gandhi and his followers. According to Nag, Tolstoy had studied Oriental religions for years. In his diary dated the 14th of September, 1896, he mentions Swami Vivekanand's Raja-Yoga. Swami Vivekanand (1863-1902) was a well-known Indian scholar, philosopher and activist, and one of India's leading social reformers of the modern era. Vivekananda is said to have forged the unity of East and West in the area of philosophy.

Nag mentions another diary entry regarding Tolstoy's correspondence with Sanyasi Baba Premananda Bharati, a resident of California. Tolstoy took so much interest in Baba Bharati's booklet *Krishna* (1904), that he arranged for the translation of the booklet into Russian. In his 'A Letter to a Hindu' (1909) Tolstoy quotes extensively from this booklet.

Further, Nag says:

> Nearly half a century ago, at the hospital of Kazan, Tolstoy the young soldier met for the first time one Asian Buddhist monk from Mongolia. Since then he had been seeking light from the Orient by reading all the important books on Oriental religions and Philosophy. This aspect of his life was first noticed and brought out by my late lamented friend Paul Birukov, author of '*Tolstoy and the Orient*'. (1950, p. 125)

Another Russian scholar, E. Halperine Kaminsky, published in 1912, two volumes. The first, *Tolstoy by Tolstoy* contained his autobiographical letters between 1848-1879. The second volume is entitled *The Thoughts of Humanity*. It is a book of Tolstoy's

favourite quotations from outstanding thinkers and texts of the Orient and the Occident. Nag says,

> Three days before Tolstoy's death his disciple M. Gorbornov brought before him the first two fascicules of that book. It was published after Tolstoy's death. In this posthumous work we find the vast range and profundity of his spiritual searchings. Starting from the early Brahminical and Buddhist texts he turned to Chinese, the Semitic and the Greeco-Roman philosophies....But the most interesting for us Indians are the chance quotations or adaptations of the Indian thoughts in the writings of Tolstoy. In the archives of U S.S,R. probably some day, some scholar will assemble fully the relevant documents; meanwhile we are grateful to some authors like P. Birukov for giving us very revealing indications regarding Tolstoy's approach to the thoughts of India and the Orient......... It was P. Birukov who first pointed out that the earliest contact of Tolstoy with Oriental thought was in 1847, when he met the Mongolian Lama at the Kazan Hospital. Tolstoy made extensive studies of Buddhism and the basic doctrine of Ahimsa, as he gathered from many works of the French and German Orientalists. (Ibid.)

There is another book on Tolstoy and Gandhi by Martin Green, *Tolstoy and Gandhi - Men of Peace* (1983) *A Biography,* it is particularly relevant in its detail. Green specifically mentions the changes in the later part of Tolstoy's life:

> During this period, moreover Tolstoy turned to India, to China, and to the East in general, in search of truths, models, and traditions with which to replace those of his own culture. He became an Orientalist....attracted by its traditions of asceticism; by the Buddhists. (Green,1983, p. 9)

Based on this evidence, my hypothesis is: Is it not possible that this trend caught on within the generation that followed- Roerich, Vygotsky, Stcherbatsky, Bakhtin, Voloshinov? This is quite possible because Tolstoy held great influence over the discourse of his times. Reading the book by Green involved travelling through time, through cultures, through revolutions, through the lives of Tolstoy and Gandhi. Martin Green remarks:

> The religion Tolstoy was born into has to be described in paradoxical terms. Nineteenth century Russia was in some ways still a religious country, a religious culture like Gandhi's India or medieval Christendom, before Western

> Europe was rationalized by the modern system. Tolstoy's mother was a woman of piety. Religious practices and large religious institutions were accessible to him in his childhood, in picturesque and attractive form, and his writings show that he was attentive to them. Nevertheless there is a sense that religion never touched him intimately, never as for example George Eliot was touched by religion in childhood or as Gandhi was. Russian Orthodox Christianity was primarily picturesque for him and for others in his social class, primarily out of the past and primarily belonging to the uneducated peasantry. Though as a child he was certainly taught the ethic of Christianity with its prohibition of killing and its inculcation of chastity, he was also taught, and later learned predominantly or exclusively, the quite opposite ethic appropriate to a noble….. In Russia, nobles and priests were entirely separate castes, with very different educations, houses, readings, and living habits. The Church's services were aesthetically splendid, its inmost life of prayer was impressively ascetic and mystical, but in between those two extremes, as a moral and institutional presence, it was negligible or contemptible. (Ibid., pp. 20-21)

Contrast this with what was happening in India. In India this was the time of great religious and social revival; this was the time of Aurobindo's return from England to take up education and then revolutionary work, and of Annie Besant's arrival, (Annie Besant belonged to the Theosophical society started by Madam Blavatsky. Blavatsky's writings were translated by the Roerichs, where she extended her influence from theosophy to cultural revival and active politics). This was also the time of Vivekanand's visit to the United States, which meant the beginning of bringing Western philosophic thoughts to India, and Eastern philosophic thoughts to the West. Gandhi at this time was just becoming a political reformer. They were all harnessing religion for the cause of nation building in India. This was the time Gandhi began reading Tolstoy's *The Kingdom of God is Within You.* After 1906, when he started going to prison as part of the 'non-violent' movement, it was one the books he carried with him to court and from one prison to another.

What follows are two extensive quotes from an on-line academic discussion group, covering material that is not covered in books elsewhere. Consider what two contemporary scholars have to say about Tolstoy, Gandhi and Ahimsā (Non-violence) in particular, and about Indology in Russia in general.

Jan Houben a contemporary Bhartṛhari scholar says:

> Pre- and non-institutional Indology seems to have flourished in pre-Soviet Russia. One instance of this which struck me recently is that the notion of ahimsa/non-violence was adapted to Russian literature much earlier than to other European literatures, where it became well-known only in the 20's of this century, after Gandhi's actions in British India. But Gandhi sought his own personal inspiration in Tolstoy and through him rediscovered his path toward the law of love and passivity. Writing Tolstoy from London in 1909, Gandhi signed himself 'Your humble disciple', and received back the advice to read 'Letter to a Hindu' . . . (Raymond Schwab1984: 451f, *The Oriental Renaissance*, Eng. tr. New York).
> Tolstoy's understanding of Indian thought in general and of ahimsa in particular, incidentally, is said to have been shaped very much by Buddhism
> My triple question to Russian-speaking Indologists on this list:
> Which word was used by Tolstoy to express the notion of ahimsa?
> Did it gain much currency beyond the circle of Tolstoy-admirers?
> Did the term somehow remain in use in a similar meaning in the Sovjet period?
> (Indology Discussion list. Retrieved on Feb. 1 1998, from: http://www.ucl.ac.uk/~ucgadkw/indology.html)

Yaroslav Vassilkov a contemporary Russian Linguist replies,

> Tolstoy seems to be the first eminent writer in European literature who was so strongly influenced by Indian religious thought. There is an important article by Alexander Syrkin: The "Indian" in Tolstoy. Tolstoy even described his own spiritual crisis and subsequent rediscovery of religion using the imagery of an Indian parable (of archetypal origin, as I tried to show in: Parable of a Man hanging in a Tree and its archaic Background. –"Jadavpur Journal of Comparative Literature", Calcutta, vol.32, 1994-95, pp. 38-51, and another version in: SthApakazrAddham. Professor G.A.Zograph Commemorative Volume. St Petersburg, 1995, pp. 257-268 [I think there is a copy of this book in the library of the Kern Institute] Tolstoy used mostly Western translations and interpretations of Indian texts but benefited also from the books by and personal contacts with the founder of the Buddhist studies in Russia Th.Shcherbatsky's teacher - Ivan P, Minayev.
> 1. Which word was used by Tolstoy to express the notion of ahimsa?.
> Tolstoy's expression for "ahimsa" was: "neprotivlenije zlu nasiliem", which means literally: "non-resistance to evil by violent means".
> 2. Did it gain much currency beyond the circle of Tolstoy-admirers?

> No, but the "circle of Tolstoy's admirers" was very wide, including maybe tens of thousands of people both from intelligentsia and common folk, living in communes all over the Russian Empire.
> 3) Did the term somehow remain in use in a similar meaning in the Soviet period?
> Official Soviet propaganda used it only ironically, making fun of it. It was used, of course, in the communes of Tolstoy's followers, but towards the end of the 1920s these communes were closed and their inhabitants exiled or imprisoned.
> (Indology discussion list Retrieved on Feb. 2, 1998, from: http://www.ucl.ac.uk/~ucgadkw/indology.html)

The above is also a part of the time and the environment, within which is embedded psychology's struggle to establish itself as a discipline within Russia. The dialogical tension between the West and alternatives provided by the Eastern philosophy is not fully realized if the contribution of these Eastern philosophies to the ideological debate in the West is overlooked or ignored. Specifically, Indological studies in Russia in the 19th and 20th century have been through rough and turbulent times because of state censorship and persecution of scholars. Yaroslav Vassilkov, a contemporary scholar of Indological studies, claims that "The complete history of modern Russian Indology is yet to be written".

Vygotsky's *Thought and Language* was written amid the cultural context of the heteroglossia of voices from the East and the West, and my interpretive processes take into account this context.

To pursue this area I went on a further trail to search for any book or article dealing specifically with Russian Indology and continued to collect related information from various sources. While reading contemporary scholars' writings on the scientific potential of Indian thought, I was reminded of similar views expressed by Stcherbatsky. However, my notes did not provide the information I was looking for, so I had to further

delve into the Russian Indological scene of the 1800-1900's to make explicit that this was a time of close ties between Russia and India, in terms of economic, cultural and intellectual exchange between the two countries. This was the time when ancient Indian Sanskrit, Pali and Tibetan texts were being made available to European scholars, and European scholars were greatly interested in the East and in the acquisition and translation of these ancient manuscripts.

Indology in Russia and the scientific significance of Indian thought

The following is not a survey nor a historical presentation of Russian Indology, but a selective, reflective rendering of information, discovered in the process of exploring "echoes of the east" in Vygotsky's text. I will first comment on the approach of the Russian scholars who, unlike their European counterparts, gave importance to the scientific potential of Indian thought. Then, follows a brief section on one of the most noted Indologists – Stcherbatsky. I also touch upon some related recent discussions on the subject because such information is not easily available. Lastly, I summarize the main and relevant ideas from *The Image of India: The study of Ancient Indian Civilization in the USSR* (1984). A rendering of these various facets, however, will hopefully convey some idea about Indological studies in Russia.

Russian scholars and the scientific potential of Indian thought

Related to science and spirituality is the following passage from the writings of Sri Aurobindo:

> In the words of Sri Aurobindo, "Man has first to affirm himself, but also to evolve and finally to exceed himself; he has to enlarge his partial being into a complete being, his partial consciousness into an integral consciousness; he has to achieve mastery of his environment but also world union and world

> harmony; he has to realize his individuality but also to enlarge it into a cosmic self and a universal and spiritual delight of existence. (Raman, 2000)

To me, this philosophic reflection by Sri Aurobindo, connects to scientific as well as historic issues. The scientific aspect concerns questions like – what is the nature of consciousness. How does one define levels of consciousness, and how does one evolve and go about integrating these levels of consciousness? There is reference to the relationship of the individual to the social in the passage above; how is this achieved? How does Indian thought explain the above – spiritually, philosophically, scientifically and logically? Finally, in terms of the historical aspect, the message of mastery over the environment, of working for world union and world harmony must have sounded very inspiring to those involved in social reform in India as well as in Russia. I am reflecting on this short passage by Sri Aurobindo not only because it is so representative of Indian thought, but also because of the associations with Sri Aurobindo's name, - the name of Pitirim A Sorokin (1889-1968), for example. Sorokin taught at the Psycho-Neurological Institute while at St. Petersburg. He stated that the root of his philosophy (pantheism), was "integralism". While at Harvard he conducted an analysis of the ancient techniques of Yogas, among other things (Myers, n.d.). Pitirim A Sorokin was well acquainted with Sri Aurobindo's works because he is quoted as saying, " Aurobindo's treatises are among the most important works of our time in philosophy, ethics and humanities. Sri Aurobindo himself is one of the greatest living sages of our time" (Myers,n.d.). Ellen Myers, in her article, *Pantheist* states:

> Pitirim A. Sorokin (1889-1968), chairman of the department of sociology at Harvard University from 1930-1959. He stated that the roots of his religious

> philosophy, "Integralism," were in the ancient, powerful, and perennial stream of philosophical thought represented by Taoism, the Upanishads, and Bhagavad Gita shared by all branches of Buddhism, including the Zen Buddhist thinkers (Ibid.).

As usual I was engaged in questions again -- Was Sorokin involved in research on Yoga techniques at St. Petersburg as well? Why did Sorokin leave Russia? Were Vygotsky and other Russian intellectuals acquainted with Sri Aurobindo's works too? Were Vygotsky and Luria aware of Sorokin's work? Most important of all, under what constraints, individual, social, political, were the Russian intellectuals working in those days? Sorokin's remarks about Aurobindo reveal that there was cultural contact between India and Russia through the writings of prominent Indian intellectuals of those times. I was curious to know more about St. Petersburg and its involvement in India.

On the scientific significance of Indian thought, one contemporary Indian scholar remarks:

> Though Indian thought deals to a great extent on the question of consciousness it becomes essential to separate those elements that are significant scientifically, from those that are religious and philosophic (Kak,1988).

Reading this I remembered Vygotsky's statement in *Thought and Language:*

> We subjected to critical analysis those theories that seemed richer in their scientific potential, and thus could become a starting point for our own inquiry. Such an inquiry from the very beginning has been in opposition to theories that although dominant in contemporary science, nevertheless call for review and replacement.(1997, p. *lix-lx*).

Was Vygotsky aware of the scientific potential of Indian theories of Language? We can only guess, but we do know what Roerich the Russian artist, philosopher, and linguist, who settled in India and opened a research laboratory in the foothills of the Himalayas, has to say about his own research:

> We are deeply interested in anything connected with the energy of thought. The zone of the brain and of the heart, so much put forward now by scientists of all the world, can't be called with a hazy word "mysticism", but it is a most real scientific cognizance. (Roerich, n.d.)

Roerich was not alone in his assertion. Theodor Stcherbatsky (1866-1942), the well-known Russian Indologist was the first among the European scholars to speak up against the 'romantic fascination for the mystic East'. He insisted on the importance of recognizing India's contribution to science and rationalism and said:

> Just as the European mind is not altogether and always free from mysticism, so is the Indian mind not at all necessarily subjected to it. (Stcherbatsky, 1969, pp. xxii -xxiii)

I learned that the Russian approach to the study of Indian culture and language was in great contrast to the other European nations. Unlike their European counterparts, Russian scholars approached Indian thought from the point of view of materialism, logic, rationality and science as opposed to mysticism, religion, romanticism and contemplation, as we will see. The credit for this perspective goes to a large extent to the Russian Indologists of those times. Initially, my readings consisted of two books - *Papers of Stcherbatsky,* translated by Harish Chandra Gupta (1969); and *Further Papers of Stcherbatsky* (n.d.), also translated by the same author. The following facts and descriptions are from Debiprasad Chattopadhyaya's introduction to *Papers of Stcherbatsky.* The two books deal with Stcherbatsky but in reading about Stcherbatsky one gets to know a great deal about the Indological scene of Russia of that time.

Stcherbatsky – Russian Indologist (1866-1942)

Stcherbatsky is said to have 'discovered' the importance of the logical traditions associated with the names of Dharmakĩrti (7th century AD) and Diṅnāga (500 AD); he

called this the tradition of "Buddhist logic". Stcherbatsky wanted to rationalize "Buddhist logic" and bring it to the attention of the scholars. He criticized those European scholars who claimed,

> That the ancient Indians were incapable of exact thinking and lucid presentations and attributed these qualities exclusively to ancient Greek and modern science. ….There is a widely spread prejudice that positive philosophy is to be found only in Europe. It is also a prejudice that Aristotle's treatment of logic was final….There is no agreed opinion on what the future of logic will be, but there is a general dissatisfaction with what it at present is. We are on the eve of reform. The consideration at this juncture of the independent and altogether different way in which the problems of logic, formal as well as epistemological, have been tackled by Diṅnāga and Dharmakĩrti will probably be found of some importance (Stcherbatsky, 1969, p. iii].

He also published the following works in his effort to reconstruct Buddhist Logic: *Logic in Ancient India* 1902; and, two volumes of *The Theory of Knowledge and Logic According to the Later Buddhists* 1903-9. This discovery of the Buddhist tradition was possible because of the tradition of Sanskrit, Tibetan and Mongolian studies set up in St. Petersburg, largely inspired by Minaev (1840-1890).

According to Chattopadhyaya, Stcherbatsky was the first Indologist to be seriously drawn to the rational and logical contributions of the later Buddhists. In this he differed not only from the Tibetologists preceding him but also from other European thinkers such as Schopenhauer, Hegel, Deussen, Max Muller and others, who were constructing a picture of Indian wisdom by emphasizing only the religious, "spiritual" and the idealistic tendency of the Upanişads and Vedanta. Stcherbatsky protested against this unscientific and non-objective tendency that was then prevalent in Europe. In his writings, Stcherbatsky covered a broad range of topics concerning Indian cultural heritage. His papers, essays articles and books dealt with such topics as *The theory of*

Poetry in India; The Categorical Imperative in the Brahmanas; The Scientific Achievements of Ancient India. Further, he was one of the first among modern scholars to write *The History of Materialism in India*. Indian Intellectuals consider Stcherbatsky to be the greatest of European scholars on Indian philosophy. In writing about Stcherbatsky, Gupta laments:

> What is unfortunately lacking in our knowledge of Stcherbatsky's relations with India is an adequate information of his personal friends and colleagues. From the description of Stcherbatsky's collection preserved in the archives of the Academy of Sciences, USSR, it can be assumed that Stcherbatsky was in close touch with the eminent Indians of his time. (Ibid., 1969, p. xvi)

Lenin commended the work of Russian Indologists and took great interest in the development of Russian Oriental studies. On the significance of Orientalist studies Lenin told the Indologists, "here is your subject. It seems far away. Yet it is close. Go to the masses, to the workers, and tell them about the history of India…and see how they will respond to it. And you yourself draw inspiration from it for fresh research, work and study of great scientific importance" (Ibid., p. xviii).

Indological studies in the USSR benefited greatly under Lenin. Noted Indologists, including Stcherbatsky, became involved in organizing new institutes. Maxim Gorky initiated the idea of setting up a new institute for an all round study of the Orient, and Lenin decreed that the Peoples' Commissariat of Nationalities should take urgent steps to set up such an institute. So, The Moscow Institute of Oriental Languages and The Petrograd Institute of Modern Oriental Languages were set up. It is said that during his time, Stcherbatsky was more than just an individual scholar, rather, he had

become an institution in himself. He trained a number of brilliant scholars and influenced a whole generation of Russian Indologists. Chattopadhyaya remarks:

> Stcherbatsky's interest in Indian cultural heritage was not a romantic fascination for the mystic East in which his European contemporaries were seeking an escape from the sickness and degradation of their own capitalist society. Certainly, again, it had nothing to do with the peculiarly perverted moral sanction for colonial exploitation which another section of his European contemporaries was trying to derive by depicting Indian culture as being inherently stunted in matters of science and rationalism…..Stcherbatsky insisted on the importance of recognizing India's contribution to science and rationalism and together with Ol'denburg worked for making such data available to scholars. (Ibid., pp. xxi-xxii)

Further,

> The Academy of Sciences decided to undertake the publication of translations of monumental works on Indian philosophy from Sanskrit and other Oriental languages.…Our knowledge in this field still could not be deemed to be more than a mere conjecture on the nature of Indian philosophy. The main Indian philosophical system, the one that diligently worked out Indian logic and epistemology-the Nayāya-System, still remained to be studied and its main treatises were yet to be translated into any European language…..Indian thought on the whole still remained enveloped in the mist of Oriental fantasy and the orderly forms of its consistent logical theories were hidden from the keen sight of the historians of philosophy owing first to the inadequacy of the materials available to them and second to the lack of any systematic methods of its scientific study. Besides this stage of scientific knowledge, there could be discerned, in the wider circles of reading public, a morbid interest in Indian philosophy caused by the hazy state of our knowledge of the subject and the various fables of supernatural powers rampart therein. (Ibid.)

Do these quotes indicate the 'philosophical arguments' that Vygotsky hints at? They definitely give us an idea of Stcherbatsly's approach to Indian philosophy and at the same time reveal Russia's interest in studies related to Indian thought, and the kind of research involved. One important factor that contributed to Stcherbatsky's approach regarding Indic studies, was the growing strength of the democratic movement in Russia, which brought about the October Revolution. The Russian intellectuals connected with this democratic movement, were themselves struggling against exploitations and imperialist designs of the Czarist regime. These intellectuals felt empathy for the Indian

situation, and were responsible for creating in Russia, an atmosphere of sympathy for the people of India. In this way they helped the Russian Indologists develop an alternative methodological approach to the study of Indian cultural heritage:

> What is the reason for this advantage of Russian Indologists over most of their Western counterparts? The question is in need of a detailed consideration. Yet we can mention here one obvious reason for this difference. Undoubtedly it is because of the general atmosphere of sympathy and friendly feelings towards the oppressed peoples of the East nurtured in Russia in the 19th century under the influence of Russian revolutionary democracy in which the progressive intelligencia was brought up. It is sufficient to mention that the organs of revolutionary democrats like Otechestvennye Zapisky and Sovermennik regularly published in their pages materials and reviews on the life of the Eastern peoples, including that of India….N.G. Chernyshevsky and N.A. Dobrolyubov were highly interested in the East, particularly India and devoted many moving articles to India, in which, by exposing the groundlessness of Europeo-centricism, they highly estimated the achievements of the people of the East in the field of culture, warmly supported them in their struggle for national independence and condemned the colonial rampage of the capitalist 'civilizers'…Chernyshevsky was one of the first Russian thinkers who, even in the middle of the 19th century opposed the then widely prevalent view-point that Greece was the homeland of philosophy. He emphatically argued that all this is only due to the lack of knowledge about the East in those times.' Like most of the Russian scholars, Chernyshevsky highly estimated the level of scientific and philosophical thoughts of the Indian nation. In his opinion, the ancient Indians were not only in no way inferior to the ancient Greeks but in many respects were undoubtedly superior to them. (Ibid., p. xxiii)

Stcherbatsky, together with other Russian intellectuals of his times, shared this intellectual atmosphere created by the Russian revolutionary democrats. Stcherbatsky studied under Minaev, G. Bühler and Jacobi. Mineav, who is said to have influenced Tolstoy with regard to Eastern thought, taught in the Faculty of Comparative Linguistics at the University of St. Petersburg.

Until this point, I had gathered my information on Russian Indology and the study of Indian thought in Russia from several different sources. I realized that to trace the iconographic presentation of Indian thought in Vygotsky, it was important to understand

Indian thought and the philosophy of Language within the tradition, but it was equally important to understand the study of Indian thought within Russia as well.

Recent discussions on the web by contemporary Indologists on Russian Indology

Reading about Indology in Europe was fascinating, so I searched web sites for information and discovered the discussion forum on Indology. I started to read closely postings on the Indology discussion list and this proved to be a great learning experience. Some passages relevant to Russian Indology are given below. According to Yaroslav Vasillikov, a contemporary Russian Indologist, the Russian Indological scene is a much-neglected aspect of Indology. Responding to one member's queries he replies:

> If you are interested in the review material written in English on the history and main trends of Russian Indology in the xx century, you will probably find it useful to acquaint yourself 1) with the article: G.N. Roerich, Indology in Russia. – "The Journal of the Greater India Society", vol. 12, pt. 2, Calcutta, 1945 - the pre-war period ended, in fact as early as 1937, when all Scherbatsky's pupils were executed or imprisoned as "imperialist agents" and "propagandists of Buddhist religion". Before that, in the 1920's and the beginning of the 30's there was really some cooperation, exchange of ideas and polemics between Russia and the West – e.g. between Scherbatsky and L.de la Valee Poussin.
>
> Then Classical Indology was revived in the late 50's by George N. Roerich, who had returned from India to Moscow. Some of his pupils later joined the so called Moscow Tartu School of Semiotics and published their articles, in particular in the famous series "Trudy poznakovym systems" ('Works on Semiotics", a special series of "Acts rrt ommentations" of Tartu University, Estonia). Their work got some response in the West and east reviewed, in particular, by 2) Wendy Donigger O'Flaherty,…("Disregarded Scholars: A Survey of Russian Indology. South Asian Review, Vol 5, Number 4, July 1972) But contrary to people's expectations, the détente only worsened the situation in Soviet humanitarian sciences. Brezhnev decided to compensate the concessions he made to the West in politics by strengthening his control over "ideology". Some Indologists lost their jobs after they signed the letters of protest against the persecution of dissidents, some had a lot of troubles after the fabricated trial in Buryatia of the Buddhist scholar and religious leader B. Dandaron (1972-73). For about 10 years any studies of Buddhism remained practically under ban in the USSR (at least they could not appear in print), and classical Indology in general was looked at by the authorities with suspicion. Many eminent specialists in Classical Indian culture were forced to emigrate – among them A. Pyatogorsky, A. Syrkin, B. Oguibenin and others. But other people stayed, and now the true leaders of Classical Indian studies in Russia – such as T. Ya. Yelizarenkova and V.N. Toporov-still belong to the same generation and same scholarly circle. I think you may find some useful

I did manage to read two of the sources mentioned by Vassilikov in the above discussion. Before I give a brief summary of the main and relevant ideas discussed in those sources, I would like to cite some more from the above mentioned discussion list, because I have not come across this information in the articles and books to which I have had access. About the exchange of ideas between East and West, Russia and Western Europe in the field of Indian studies Yaroslav Vassilikov further says:

> Speaking about the exchange of ideas between East and West, Russia and Western Europe in the field of Indian studies, we should stress the fact that George Roerich, who had graduated from University of London, Harvard and Sorbonne, worked for about 30 years in India and then, on his return to Russia, founded in Moscow a center for Classical Indian and Tibetan Studies – after they had been banned in the USSR for more than two previous decades. Roerich himself started teaching Sanskrit and Pali and guiding young Indologists in their work. He managed to revive the "Bibliotheca Buddhica" series ((banned in 1937). But in 1960, when the first volume of the renewed translation of *Dhammapada*, done by one of G. Roerich's pupils Vladimir Toporov) was in the press, somebody reported to the authorities, that G. Roerich and his pupils are going to publish a "Buddhist religious text". Immediately the printing process was stopped. Roeerich was told that *Dhammapada*, as a book containing "religious propaganda", will never be published in the USSR. But then suddenly Roerich's old friend, the Ambassador of Ceylon and a Buddhist scholar Malalasekera came to his help. He invited many high soviet officials, including some leading "ideological workers", to a festive reception at the Ceylonese Embassy. Only at the Embassy most of them learned that the reception had to celebrate "the would-be publication of the great work of Ceylonese literature – *Dhammapada* – for the first time in Russian translation". Of course, after that the party bosses could not ban the publication. But they had their revenge on Roerich next day after the book appeared in print. He was invited to Director's office at the Institute of Oriental Stuidies and crudely reprimanded by the Institute's Communist party officials who shouted at him accusing him in "subversive activities". People say that this incident caused Roerich premature death from the heart attack several days later. I hope you will forgive me this excursus into the history of Indian studies in the former Soviet Union.
>
> Indology discussion list, Jan 31, 1998.
>
> Retrieved from: http://www.ucl.ac.uk/~ucgadkw/indology.html)

In response to the above post George Thompson wrote:

> On the contrary, I hope that the entire list would accompany me in inviting you to say more. I think it is important that the history of Indology in the former Soviet Union be better known to us all. And it is important not only for

> historical reasons. Not only in Buddhist studies, but also in vedic studies important advances have been made by scholars who have had to overcome ordeals like those that you have described. The remarkable thing is that even within such a hostile environment so much was accomplished! I myself, as a Vedicist, have benefited greatly from the exposure that I have had to the work of scholars like Propp, Jacobson, Luria, Bakhtin, Lotman, Ouspenski, Toporov, Elizarenkova, Ivanov, Gamkreldize, Oguibenine, et all., who move so skillfully among numerous disciplines—historical and synchronic linguistics, semiotics, poetics, etc. This is a rich intellectual tradition that combines a mastery of traditional philology with great theoretical sophistication and courage to experiment with new ideas. A combination, it seems to me, that will assure a thriving future for Vedic studies, as for Indology in general. So, please, tell us more. (Ibid.)

The discussions above touched upon many aspects of Russian Indology. To get a clearer picture, I decided to read the sources mention in the discussions above. The book *The Image of India: The study of Ancient Indian Civilization in the USSR* (1984), presents a historical and a systematic perspective, in-spite of the fact that much was left unsaid because the book was censored for political reasons. Below is a brief summary of the main and relevant ideas in these readings.

In their book, *Image of India*(1984)*,* G.M. Bongard-Levin & A.A. Vegasin present the history of the study of ancient India and its culture in the USSR from the early times to the present. According to the authors there are many references to India in ancient Russian literature. They say that, not only Russians, but other nationalities within the former USSR also have an ancient tradition of cultural ties with India well before Vasco de Gama's travels in 1492. Then, there is the influence of Buddhism, and the fact that there are a great number of Buddhist, Tibetan and Mongolian texts stored in Buddhist monasteries in the region of Buryatia. Peter the Great, is said to have issued directives in 1712 to explore the possibilities of a direct route to India to facilitate trade between India and Russia. Alexander Radishchev, a Russian revolutionary, is said to

have protested against the activities of the East India Company. There is mention of Gerasim Stepanovich Lebedev, a Russian actor, musician and scholar, who spent 12 years in India from 1785 to 1797. He was the first Russian to point out the affinity of Sanskrit with European and Slavonic languages, and is considered the founder of Indology in Russia. In the 19th century, the study of Sanskrit started in St. Petersburg and Kazan Universities. St. Petersburg is considered to have one of the richest collections of invaluable manuscripts related to Indological studies. By the end of the 19th century, Indology was firmly established in Russia. Many Russian writers and intellectuals -- Roerich, Tolstoy, Maxim Gorky, Lenin, Zhukovsky, of the Russian Romantic school of poetry; Karamzin, and Alexei Baranikov – did much to bring the literature and culture of India to Russia, Maxim Gorky wrote:

> We must acquaint our peoples with one another so that all who thirst for justice, who want to live in accord with reason may realize their unity, the community of their aims and spirit and by their joint efforts overcome all the evil in the world. (Bongard-Levin & Vegasin, 1984, p. 9).

The October Socialist Revolution marked the beginning of a new stage in the Russo-Indian relationship. Revolutionary democrats such as Chernyshevsky, Pisarev and Dobrolyubov worked to acquaint Russians with India's history, its cultural heritage and the colonial British rule. Lenin played a major role in establishing the Soviet Oriental Studies. According to Bongard-Levin and Vegasin:

> The documents of those days contain a rich store of material telling of the assistance given by the Soviet state and by Lenin personally to the development of a wide programme of studies of Eastern countries, including India" (Ibid.).

This short rendering barely glosses the surface of the details recorded in the book *The Image of India:The Study of Ancient India in the USSR* (1984). Of particular interest is the statement by Bongard-Levin and Vegasin, distinguishing Russian Indology from that of other European countries. They attribute this to the absence of "Europocentricism". This, they say, was the success of Russian Oriental studies.

Another point of significance concerns Russian linguists in general, and Vygotsky in particular; the authors mention A. Potebnya, the Ukranian linguist whose book is said to have influenced Vygotsky greatly, among others. Kozulin, in his edition of Vygotsky's *Thought and Language* says:

> Vygotsky had a keen interest in James's *The Varieties of Religious Experience, Freud's Psychopathology of Everyday Life*, and *Thought and Language* the book of the nineteenth century Russian linguist and follower of Humbolt, Alexander Potebnya" (Vygotsky, 1997, p. xv).

What Kozulin does not mention is the following:

> In Russian universities of the last century there was usually a department of comparative linguistics and Sanskrit, and all leading Russian linguists, specialists in comparative linguistics, were at the same time scholars in Sanskrit. Some of them made an in depth study of Sanskrit and published special research articles. The leading Ukranian Linguist Alfanasy Potebnya studied Sanskrit in Berlin in the early 1850's...Sanskrit was considered absolutely essential for the specialized work of linguists and in particular for those working in comparative linguistics. For Russian linguists this was frequently the first step in their scholarly training. The basic achievement of Fortunatov, Baudoouin de Courtainay and A. Potebnya were not in the field of Sanskrit studies, although the study of Sanskrit and Sanskrit literature was a school for them. (Bongard-Levin & Vegasin, 1984, p. 99).

If one seriously starts looking, one comes across much evidence that, in the 1840's and 1850's, Russia was drawn to the study of Sanskrit, and the study of India formed an integral part of the general history course in the universities in Russia (Image Of India, 1984, p 74). Bongard-Levin and Vegasin's book is filled with evidence of such

widespread influence of Indic studies in Russia. One can only wonder at what had to be left unsaid because of state censorship. However, the book still provides leads to crucial details relevant to my exploration, such as the kind that Vygotsky indicates:

> Vygotsky argued that psychology cannot limit itself to direct evidence, be it observable behaviour or accounts of introspection. Psychological inquiry is investigation, and like the criminal investigator, the psychologist must take into account indirect evidence and circumstantial clue – which in practice means the works of art, philosophical arguments, and anthropological data are no less important for psychology than direct evidence. (Vygotsky, 1997, pp. *xv,xvi*).

Taking my cue from Vygotsky's statement above, and knowing that direct evidence may be difficult to get, in my readings I was looking for anthropological evidence, indirect evidence, circumstantial clues, philosophical arguments, and information related to works of art to reconstruct for myself a picture of the cultural context within which Vygotsky's work is embedded. Two aspects of the above line of exploration can be specifically referred to in relation to philosophical arguments, and for works of art.

This was also the time when Russian Indologists were for the first time involved in the first art exhibition (1919) of its kind regarding Buddhist relics in Petrograd. The exhibition assumes great significance when it is realized that the Orientalists and intelligentia in St. Petersburg were the organizers of the exhibition and they viewed it with great interest:

> they tried to find in Buddhism ideas close to their own day....The outstanding Russian Indologists and scholars of Buddhism were active builders of the new life and helped to confirm the new ideals. The exhibition was a great success...prominent Russian Orientalists were giving lectures on Buddhism. In his lecture Oldenberg pointed out the importance of Indian culture to all mankind. On display were items of art, religion, writing and the daily life of the peoples of the countries where Buddhism was professed, that is China, Japan, Tibet, Mongolia, India and Ceylon. This was a major event in the history of the country in those days. (Bongard-Levin & Vegasin 1984, p. 145)

Another important fact regarding art and the 1920's, relates to the work and travels of the Roerich family. Russian painter and Indologist, Nicholas Roerich and his son G. Roerich, also an Indologist and linguist, founded a scientific research institute in India in the 1920's. *The Image of India: The study of Ancient Indian Civilization in the USSR* (1984), it is clearly mentioned that, the Roerichs:

> Worked in co-operation with the Indologists in Russia. Roerich was abroad during the Civil war Years...was working on a series of Panels --*Eastern Dreams...*His interest in the East and particularly in India was maintained due to his links with Russian Indologists and his acquaintance with their works. (Ibid.)

Conclusion

In this section I have outlined the reasons for European involvement with the East, and touched upon issues concerning scholarship related to Indic studies within Europe in general, and Russia in particular, during the 19th Century. By looking at Tolstoy and Gandhi I have brought to the surface the connections between the two cultures related to a mutual exchange of philosophic and the spiritual ideas of both Indian and Russian scholars. I have also highlighted the importance of the influence of literary giants, like Tolstoy, upon the intellectuals of the period and the generation that followed. I have commented upon the state of Russian Indology, outlining factors involved in giving an impetus to the study of Indian thought and culture within Russia, and mentioned the consequences of repression upon Indologists and other scholars connected with the study of classical Indian culture during the turbulent times of revolutions and state censorship. Commenting upon the contributions of eminent Indologists like Stcherbatsky, I have mentioned the unique approach of Russian Indologists. Russian Indologists had approached Indian thought from the point of view of materialism, logic, rationality and science as opposed to mysticism, religion, romanticism and contemplation like their European counterparts. I have also quoted extracts of recent debates on Indology by contemporary scholars to highlight the above-mentioned factors concerning Indology in Russia. Finally, I have presented a brief summary of the main and relevant ideas of the book *The Image of India* (1984), which deals with these topics in great detail. Material on this aspect of Russian history is very difficult to come across. Because of this, one can only construct a hazy and incomplete picture of the times and the issues involved.

Keeping in mind the details explored in this section can it be safely assumed therefore, that it could be because of the influence of eastern traditions on his research that Vygotsky's text was later severely criticized as "the exotic fruit of Soviet psychology" (Kozulin, 1997, p. *lv*), and his research pronounced "eclectic" and "erroneous"? Kozulin states that the controversy regarding Vygotsky's theory, centered on the problems of the relations between "consciousness, activity and reality" (Kozulin, 1997, p. *xliii-xlv)*. It is these relations that Bhartrhari explores as we will see in the next chapter.

Chapter 5
The Theory That Comes To Us From Antiquity

Bhartṛhari – Grammarian, Philosopher and Poet

As with Vygotsky, I am once again confronted with the complexity involved in outlining a theorist's thoughts, where the emphasis is not on the theory itself but also on the reading process which led to the theory. However, this paper would not be complete without reference to Bhartṛhari's theory of language. I present here, a brief and concise summary. For more on Bhartṛhari and his thought, one can refer to the works of contemporary Bhartṛhari scholars like Coward, Matilal, Houben, Aklujkar, Iyer, to name a few. Still others have commented upon the importance of his theory: for example, Scharfe, Flood, Beck, Dehejia, K.K. Raja and Kristeva. In presenting Bhartṛhari's philosophy of language and his concept of Sphota*,* I have relied mostly on the works of Matilal, and Coward. A very brief survey of some early works on Bhartṛhari's most important work the *Vākyapadiya* is given below to establish a historical perspective on the interest of European scholars regarding his thought:

1651: First European Sanskrit scholar, Dutch missionary, Abraham Roger, published some of the works of Bhartṛhari.

1874, 1875, 1883a, 1883b, 1886-7: Lorenz , Franz – Dutch translations of the *Vākyapadiya*.

1882: George Bühler's paper in German.

1899: La Terza, Emenegildo – Italian translation.

1884: First edition published in India.

Beck states that "Bhartṛhari was more or less forgotten for centuries...but he is gradually receiving the attention he deserves" (1993, p. 65). According to contemporary scholars, the study of Bhartṛhari's thought is considered to be in its infancy (Scharfe, 1977, p. 174).

Bhartṛhari is said to have lived between A.D. 425-450 and belongs to the tradition of *Pāṇinian* grammar – The Grammar school of thought. He is said to have systematized the philosophy of language. It is through his work that Grammar (*vyākarṇa*) became a full-scale drama (philosophic school of thought). In his most important work, the *Vākyapadiya,* he explicates the theory Sphoṭa.

Bhartṛhari's theory of language

Looking at Bhartṛhari's theory of language, I will first comment:

1. On levels of consciousness
2. Outline the basic ideas of the *Vākyapadiya*, such as the distinction between *word* and *sound*, and what constitutes the meaning unit of language
3. Discuss briefly his theory of Sphoṭa. In his theory these above ideas are systematically explored.

1. Levels of consciousness

Bhartṛhari's thought in general looks at consciousness from two levels: the higher level which includes the spiritual, the transcendental, and the metaphysical; and the lower level referring to the empirical, and linguistic utterance. At the higher-level, Bhartṛhari's theory of language is connected with the purpose of living, which is the realization of mokşa or liberation from the bonds of māyā/prakṛti*,* or nature. This liberation is achieved when a person attains unity with the word principle – the Śabdabrahman*,* and this is also the level of higher knowledge. Bhartṛhari's Sphoṭa

doctrine identifies itself with the ultimate reality called Śabda-brahman *or* the supreme word principle. Within this theory, consciousness and thought are intertwined, and language is the base of all human activity. In this approach, Grammar is the path to liberation. At the metaphysical level, Bhartṛhari investigates the nature and meaning of language.

At the lower level, Bhartṛhari is concerned with the process of communicating meaning. Here Bhartṛhari deals with the traditional psychology of India, the yoga psychology. Investigating the process of communication, Bhaṛtrhari deals with word and sound distinction, word meaning, the unitary nature of the whole sentence, word object connection, levels of speech, etc. His focus is on cognition and language.

This division of Bhatṛhari's theory into two levels does not imply dualism. According to Murti, Bhartṛhari's sees the entire world as a non-transforming emanation of the non-dual Brahman, the Word. "Brahman, without beginning or end, the indestructible Essence of Speech, manifests Itself in the form of things the world-process thus proceeds" (1963, p. 369). Murti further says,

> In linguistic apprehension, as in other cognitions, there is the interplay of two factors of two different levels—the empirical manifold of sense data...and the transcendental or a priori synthesis of the manifold by the Category of the Whole Unit Word which alone imparts a unity and singleness of purpose to those empirical elements which would otherwise have remained a mere manifold, unorganized without unity. The Sphoṭa is the Real Sentence or Word –Unit which operates behind the façade of the overly sensuous syllables and words (1963, p. 369)

2. Basic Ideas of The *Vākyapadiya*

Bhartṛhari's most important work is the *Vākyapadiya.* It is written in the form of *kārikās* or verses, and for a complete understanding they require a commentary. This

commentary was written by others or by the author himself. The *Vākyapadiya* is divided into three books or Kāndas. The first canto is called the Brahmakānda and it outlines the metaphysics of Linguistic Philosophy. The second canto is called the *Vākyakanda,* and it deals with linguistic topics in a linguistic background. The third canto is called *Padakānda,* and it is concerned with word, word meaning and 'relations' (Pillai, 1971, p. xv). Houben states, "A theme which pervades the entire *Vākyapadiya* is the relation between language, thought and reality (1995, p. vii)

The basic ideas of the *Vākyapadiya* are as follows (Coward& Raja, 1990, p. 211)

i. The distinction between şabda (word) and dhvani/nāda (sound)

ii. The question whether śabda (word) signifies the general or the particular; and

iii. What constitutes the meaning unit of language

I will first give a brief general comment on the above three concepts, because they form the core of Bhartṛhari's thoughts on language. I will elaborate on them later while discussing the theory of Sphoṭa.

i. The distinction between şabda and dhvani:

The distinction between word *(*şabda) and sound (dhvani) is basic to the understanding of language in all schools of Indian philosophy. "The word is considered to have a physical embodiment in the sound and it is made manifest through the latter, but the conveyance of meaning is the function of the word; the sound only invokes the word" (Murti, 1963, p. 363).

ii. The question whether şabda signifies its meaning through the universal or through the particular.

According to the view suggested by the school of Grammar, word-meaning is signified by the universal (general). "The particulars are considered as the appearances of the universal" (Ibid., p. 366).

iii. What constitutes the meaning unit of language

The above question is an important issue for the school of Grammar. Contrary to the other schools of thought, to the Grammarian, meaning is a single and a unitary whole and the real unit of language is the sentence. This concept is elaborated in the theory of *Sphoṭa*.

iii. Bhartṛhari's theory of Sphoṭa

Definition of Sphoṭa*:*

In his Sanskrit-English Dictionary, V. S. Apte defines sphota as, breaking forth, bursting or disclosure; and also as the idea that bursts out or flashes on the mind when a sound is uttered. The term, Sphoṭa*,* is derived from the root 'sphŭt' which means 'to burst', but is also described as 'is revealed' or as 'is made explicit'(Apte, V.S. 1965). Thus, the Sphoṭa in being itself revealed, conveys the meaning to the hearer. A modern scholar, John Brough, puts it this way: "the sphoṭa is simply the linguistic sign in its aspect of meaning bearers" (1951, p. 33). Some Indologists describe Sphoṭa as a "mysterious entity" (Keith, 1928, p. 387). Other scholars describe it as "not a sound or a conglomerate of sound", but "unanalyzable units which make up the linguistic reality a speaker has in his intellect and whereby he communicates" (Cardona, 1976, p, 301).

Coward (1971, p. 35) states that in general*,* Sphoṭa is considered to be a technical term, and difficult to translate into English. The word 'symbol' is also used for Sphoṭa,

emphasizing its function as a linguistic sign. It has also been suggested that the Greek conception of logos best conveys the meaning of Sphoṭa. With the Grammarians, the concept of Sphoṭa evolved into the theory of Sphoṭa and Bhartṛhari is considered to be a major representative of the theory. However, Bhartṛhari did not create the concept of Sphoṭa, he modeled it on the vedic concept, which goes far back to 4,000 to 1000 BCE.

Bhartṛhari's Theory of Sphoṭa

In the *Vākyapadiya,* Bhartṛhari develops the doctrine of Sphoṭa. For Bhartṛhari the vākya-sphoṭa, i.e. the sphoṭa in the form of a sentence, is the true form of Sphoṭa. Bhartṛhari's basic premise is that the meaning-whole, or Sphoṭa, is the fundamental unit of language; this unity is expressed in the diversity called speech. In Bhartṛhari's definition:

> A sentence is a sequenceless, partless whole, a sphoṭa that gets 'expressed' or manifested in a sequential and temporal utterance. For Bhartṛhari Sphoṭa is the real substratum, proper linguistic unit, which is identical also with its meaning. Language is not the vehicle of meaning or the conveyor belt of thought. Thought anchors language and language anchors thought. Śabdana, 'languaging', is thinking, and thought vibrates through language. In this way of looking at things there cannot be any essential differences between a linguistic unit and its meaning or the thought it conveys. Sphoṭa refers to the non-differentiated language principle (Matilal, 1990, p. 85)

Bhartṛhari and later Grammarians distinguish between "two types of śabda among the linguistic sound", Matilal calls it the sphoṭa-nādā distinction of language (Matilal, 1990, p. 85), in other words, the distinction between word and sound.

Coward explains it thus,

> In his discussion of the distinction between word and sound , Bhartṛhari employs three technical terms: śabda/sphoṭa, dhvani, and nādā. By śabda and or sphoṭa he refers to the inner unity which conveys the meaning. The dhvani*s* are described as imperceptible particles which become gross and perceptible sounds and are called nada. These nada function to suggest the word, sphoṭa or śabda. And since these nādās which are gross and audible, have division

> and sequence, the word also has parts, when in reality it is changeless and sequenceless. Bhartṛhari offers the example of reflection in water. Just as an object reflected in the water may seem to have movement because of the movement of the water, similarly the word, or sphoṭa, takes on the properties of uttered speech (sequence, loudness or softness, accent, etc.) in which it is manifested…why is the unity expressed in the diversity called speech? In Bhartṛhari'*s* view, it is because the sphoṭa itself contains an inner energy (kartū) that seeks to burst forth into expression. What appears to be unitary is thus seen to contain all the potentialities of multiplicity and complexity like the seed and the sprout or the egg and the chicken. In the *Vākyapadiya*, Bhartṛhari suggests two ways in which the energy of speech causes the phenomenalization of the sphoṭa. On the one hand there is the pent up potentiality for bursting forth residing in the sphoṭa itself, while on the other hand there is the desire of the speaker to communicate. Bhartṛhari finds language to contain and reveal its own telos. (1971, p. 37).

For the sake of communication for language users – the speaker and the hearer -- "the sphoṭa (sequenceless, durationless, and partless whole) needs to be made explicit, i.e. potentiality must be actualized, so that the hearer may receive it. This cannot be done without nada, the sequential utterances of sound-elements. This is how the nada becomes the causal factor for making sphoṭa explicit" (Matilal, 1990, p. 86). According to Murti,

> Epistemologically, it is a two level theory as applied to linguistic cognition. The Sphoṭa is a necessary intermediary and is called the Madhyamā vāk as distinct from empirical speech called vaikhari vāk. These two belong to different orders-one is empirical and the other is submerged and hidden and therefore has to be excited and manifested by the overt sounds. The relation between them is that of the soul and body, is one of identification or superimposition…that they (word and meaning) stand related and are generally identified implies that they both spring from some common source which is the ground of their being…Indian philosophers of language are not content to stop at any duality, the duality of Word and Meaning or the duality of Thought and Reality. As Bhartṛhari states it: "All difference presupposes a unity"; where there is a duality there is an identity pervading it. Otherwise one cannot be related to the other; each would constitute a world by itself (1963, pp. 368-369).

Levels of language

In advancing the Sphoṭa theory of language, Bhartṛhari speaks of levels of language in the *Vākyapadiya*. According to Bhartṛhari, there are three stages of language of speech through which *śabda* or *vāk* passes whenever one speaks. The stage where there is a complete identity of language and thought, is called the pşyantī stage; at the intermediate stage, there is complete identity of thought and language, yet their difference is discernable, it can be called the pre-verbal stage. It is at this stage that the speaker sees thought and language as differentiable and this perception impels the speaker to speak. Lastly, then there is the vaikhari stage, 'verbal' stage. (Matilal, 1990, pp. 986-87).

Let us look at each level in a little more detail, based on Coward (1971, pp. 44-47).

Vaikhari is the most external and differentiated level in which *vāk* is commonly uttered by the speaker and heard by the hearer. It is prāṇa, or breath, that enables the organs of articulation and hearing to produce and perceive sounds in a temporal sequence. Prāṇa/ breath is the instrumental cause of vaikhari vāk. The chief characteristic of vaikhari vāk is that it has a fully developed temporal sequence. At this level, individual peculiarities of the speaker (e.g. accent) are present along with the linguistically relevant parts of speech.

Going further inward, as it were, madhyamā vāk is the next level and its association is chiefly with the mind or intellect (buddhi). It is the idea, or series of words, as conceived by the mind after hearing or before being spoken out. It may be thought of as inward speech. All the parts of speech that are linguistically relevant to the sentence are present here in a latent form. At this level a variety of manifestation is

possible. The same Sphoṭa, or meaning, is capable of being revealed by a variety of forms of madhyamā, depending on the language adopted. Although there is not full temporal sequence of the kind experienced in spoken words, word and meaning are still distinct, and word order is present. Therefore, temporal sequence must also be present along with its instrumental cause, prāṇa.

The next and the innermost stage is paśyantī vak. Paśyantī is the direct experience of the vākya-sphoṭa - of meaning as a nominal whole. At this level, there is no distinction between the word and the meaning and there is no temporal sequence. All such phenomenal differentiations drop away with the intuition of the pure meaning itself. Yet, there is present at this level, a going out, or a desire for expression. This is the telos inherent in the paşyantī vision that may be said to motivate the phenomenalization into sentences and words so that communication occurs. Since paşyantī is, by definition, beyond the level of differentiated cognition, it is impossible to define it in word-sentences. It is at the level of direct intuition, and therefore, must be finally understood through experience. There is speculation of yet another higher level of language, that is, parā vāk.

Coward states:

> The levels of language analyzed by Bhartṛhari in the *Vākyapadiya* are more than linguistic theory or theological speculation. They are intimately connected with the goal or purpose of living and the practical discipline for its realization. (1971, p. 50)

The goal is the realization of mokśa/liberation, or complete union with Śabdabrahman/Supreme word principle.

Kārikā 1:123, describes the practice that helps in achieving mokśa or liberation. Iyer's (1969) translation is as follows:

> Taking his stand on the essence of the Word lying beyond the activity of breath (prāṇa), resting in one's self with all sequence eliminated, After having purified speech and after having rested it on the mind, after having broken its bonds and made it bond-free, After having reached the inner Light, he with his knots cut, becomes united with the Supreme Light. (p.1)

The philosophical and the psychological aspects of the nature of language

According to Harold Coward (1971, p. 54), a complete analysis of the *Vākyapadiya* must include both its philosophical aspect (the metaphysical inquiry into the nature and meaning of language), and its psychological aspect (the yoga explanation of the process required for communicating meaning at the lower level of language, and the discipline for becoming one with the Word). Yoga, says Coward, was the traditional psychology of India in Bhartṛhari's day, and an understanding of Yoga psychology is necessary to grasp the *Vākyapadiya* in its full perspective. The *Vākyapadiya* describes consciousness as an intertwined unity of cognition and word, that seeks to manifest itself in speech (Coward, 1971, p. 54).This metaphysical aspect of the Sphoṭa doctrine is explained by Matilal:

> The metaphysical view of Bhartṛhari is that whatever is called śabda, 'language' and artha, 'meaning', 'thought' or 'things-meant', are one and undifferentiated in their pre-verbal or potential state. Before the utterance, it is argued, the language along with whatever it conveys or means is like the yolk of a peahen's egg. In that state all the variegated colours of a full grown peacock lie dormant in potential form. Later these colours are actualized. Similarly, in the self of the speaker or the hearer, or whoever is gifted with linguistic capacity, all the variety and differenciation of linguistic items and their meanings exist as potentialities, and language and thought are identical at that stage….The sphoṭa is ultimately said to be in every sentient being. It is the linguistic capability of man, which is essentially intertwined with Consciousness….The ultimate reality for Bhartṛhari is the Absolute Consciousness which is identical with Śabdabrahman, the Eternal Verbum (Matilal, 1990, p. 95)

Bhartṛhari discusses his theory both from the speaker's perspective and the hearer's perspective, and accounts for all cognition as being identified with language, since these levels of language span the complete continuum of cognition.

Bhartṛhari says there is no cognition in the world in which the word does not figure. All knowledge is intertwined with the word. (*Vākyapadiya* 1:23). Thought at the *buddhi,* or differentiated stage of word sequences is internal speaking (intermediate stage of *vak*). And pratibhā or intuition, as a kind of muted speaking (paśyantī stage of vāk).

> Bhartṛhari, propounded the thesis that verbalizability (or, verbal or linguistic activity at some implicit level) is immanent in our cognitive faculty (VP. I, verses 123-4). It is claimed that the cognitive faculty operates with the verbal faculty. Speech or language is not just a convenient but essential conveyor of thought, rather it constitutes a vital part of thought. It implies that we verbalize, at some deeper level, as we cognize, and we cognize as we verbalize. A cognition does not cognize if it does not verbalize, at least at some implicit level..…What happens to one's private sensory experience or sensation? From Bhartṛhari's point of view as soon as sensory reaction stops being simply a physical or physiological event and matures into sensory awareness, as soon as it penetrates into the cognitive level, it becomes pregnant with 'Word', 'Śabda' or verbalizability. (Matilal, 1990, p. 133)

For Bhartṛhari, speaking is the essence of consciousness, and the means to all knowledge. By speaking, language or thought, what is meant is the conveyance of meaning - thinking does not refer to concept formation, the drawing of inferences, etc. which exist at the two lowest levels (vaikhari and madhyamā) only. Speaking, language or thought means conveyance of meaning, and meaning is intertwined with consciousness. This realization is possible at all levels of speech from moments of highest perception to simple everyday cognition.

The theory of cognition within the Indian context, gives importance to 'perception' as one of the methods of gaining knowledge. Most Indian philosophers –

the Buddhists, the Naiyayikas, and the Mimāmsakas – believe that there are two types of perceptual awareness, nirvikalpa and savikalpa. The first is related to sensory awareness where no concept and no language or word (śabda) can appear, and the second, to the awareness where words, concepts and universals are present. The argument is that the pure object – the given – is where śabda, or word, has no place, such as the body's 'raw feels'. Bhartṛhari, however, maintained the opposite view: that even in the nirvikalpa or non-conceptual state, awareness is interpreted with śabda (word) or vāg-rūpata.

> Without such vāg-rūpata (word-impregnation) which Bhartṛhari calls pratyavamarśa, 'determination by word' (I, verse 124), (other schools of thought call it, or parāmarśa) an awareness cannot be aware of an object, and illumination will not illuminate (na prakāśah prakāśeta). Prakāśa and vimarśa-called 'illumination' and 'discrimination' in English are two mutually complementary properties of any awareness-episode. If prakāśa is the light, vimarśa is what makes the object distinguishable and distinct. An awareness is thus both prakāśa and vimarśa. A pure prakāśa without vimarśa is impossible in theory. Bhartṛthari has said that even a new born baby acts by virtue of an awareness where the seed of word-penetration must have been sown. Implicit in such argument is a special theory of action and a theory of awareness, and their inter-relationship. All our activities are implicitly prompted by some specific awareness of some purpose or other. The instinctual awareness of babies, awareness that prompts them to act, to cry, or even to make the effort to articulate their first words, must be a sort of awareness where the purpose and the method to achieve the purpose are distinguished and it presupposes vimarśa (discrimination) and hence śabdavahana (penetration by word). Implicit in such argument are a special theory of action and a theory of awareness, and their interrelationship. All our activities are implicitly prompted by some specific awareness of some purpose or other (Ibid., pp. 136-137).

And according to Houben,

> Discussion on levels of speech does not occupy a central place in Bhartṛhari's thought, it is not presented as an important subject nor elaborated as such…. in the larger part of the *Vākyapadiya* it is useful to distinguish between reality as expressed in language and ultimate reality….In this sense Bhartṛhari is very much concerned with the limits of language (1995, pp. 275-276).

The distinction between reality as expressed in language, and ultimate reality, is explored by Bhartṛihari when describing word-object connection. The relation of vācya

(word) and vācka (object) is called the 'signification' relation; the Sanskrit name is vācya-vācaka-bhāva. Bhartṛhari, in the first verse of chapter 3 of part III of *Vākyapadiya* says: "From the utterance of words, the speaker's idea, the external object and the form of the word itself are understood. There stands (therefore) a relation between them (utterance of the word and the other three)" (Matilal, 1990, p. 124). For Bhartṛhari, the 'objects meant' do not constitute the external objects; rather the object meant is what is grasped by the speaker's awareness. Our activities may be prompted by language and deal with external realities, but language does not mean or signify them. They are understood at the utterance of the word because otherwise, our activities would not be possible. Linguistic signification according to Bhartṛhari, refers to a separate realm.

From the point of view of Bhartṛhari's Sphoṭa, or the notion that language is an integral part of our consciousness, both speech and writing can be the 'illuminators' of the Sphoṭa. One is not primary, and the other does not distort the Sphoṭa. Both 'transform' the untransformable, unmodifiable Sphoṭa, which is part and parcel of everybody's consciousness. In the light of Bharṭhari's theory, therefore, both the translations and the original (whether vocal or written) are in some sense transformations (Matilal,1990, p. 131).

The theory of Sphoṭa and Art

Bhartṛhari's Sphoṭa theory of language also extends to the psychology of art. Exploring the connection between art and Bhartṛhari's theory of language, Dehajia in his book *The Advaita of Art* states, "Bhartṛhari's sphoṭa is more than a theory of language….It has provided aesthetics in the Indian tradition a definition and has given it

a validity and structure" (Dehejia, 1996, p. 39). In his book, Dehajia explores how śabda evolves into kāvya – poetic language. According to Dehejia, Indian thought is interested not only in cognitive knowledge, but also subjective realization. Dehajia's interest is a close examination of Bhartṛhari's analysis of language to see if it can provide that missing link in the evolution of śabda (word/language) understood as *kāvya (*poetics*)*. Bhartṛhari's exploration of the theory of Sphota influenced poetics and literary criticism within the Sanskrit tradition in major way.

Conclusion

In conclusion, I quote what Bhartṛhari scholars have to say about Bhartṛhari: Matilal on Bhartṛhari's theory of language.

> Bhartṛhari's theory of language is a very complex one. For him language is an activity-a type of activity in which all human beings, in fact all sentient beings, engage. The Sanskrit name for this activity is śabdānā or śabda-vyapāra. It is 'languaging'. In Bhartṛhari's metaphor it is the very vibration *(*spaṇda*)* of consciousness
> This theory has many facets.
> 1.) Bhartṛhari tells us that language or śabda plays an indispensable part in our cultural life at different levels of consciousness. In fact, it makes the transaction between sentient beings possible.
> 2.) He further asserts that śabda or language is the basis of the distinction between the sentient and the insentient
> 3.) All thought, all awareness in intertwined with 'languaging', for there cannot be any manifestation of awareness unless it is illuminated by sabda.
> 4.) There are two levels of language or sabda which all linguists must recognize, the implicit or the inner speech and the articulate noise. The former he called sphota, the latter nada, 'sound', 'noise'. The former is more real, it is the causal basis of the latter.
> 5.) Above all, Bhartṛhari propounds a cosmological thesis. The whole universe (or we should say the linguistic universe), consisting of two different types of things, the vācyas,*(*signified*)* bits and pieces of the constructed world to which language refers, and the linguistic expressions, the vācaka (signifiers), has evolved out of one principle called the Word-Essence, śabda-tattva, the Eternal Verbum, śabda-brahman, the ever-extending consciousness of the sentient.
> We may discount this point as a theological or metaphysical bias, but there may be an important truth implicit in it here. Our perceived world is also an interpreted world. And this interpretation is invariably in terms of some

language or other. Interpretation is 'languaging'. Bhartṛhari believes that both language and the world it purports to refer to (and this world by his own explicit admission may or may not refer with the external, actual world) form an indivisible, unitary whole. In the light of such a theory it is easy to see how the vācaka-vācya (signifier-signified) distinction is artificial, provisional and ultimately collapsible into a unity from which it never arises.
The first verses of the text *Vākyapadiya* runs thus:
The essence of language has no beginning and no end. It is the imperishable Brahman, the ultimate consciousness, which is transformed in the form of meanings and which facilitates the functioning of the world. (Verse 1,1)
An absolute beginning of language is untenable. Language is continuous and co-terminous with the human or any sentient being. There is no awareness in this world without its being intertwined with language. All cognitive awareness appears as if it is interpenetrated with language. (Verse 1,123)
If the language impregnated nature went away from it, then a cognition would not manifest (any object), for that (language impregnated nature) is the distinguishing nature of our cognitive awareness. (Verse 1,124)
(Matilal,1990, pp. 120-130)

Harold Coward on Bhartrhari's thinking:

I found myself particularly drawn to Bhartṛhari's thinking because it spanned the diverse disciplines of philosophy, psychology and theology, and because it has been debated right up to the present day....Although Bhartṛhari lived in India many centuries ago, his writing has a universal appeal that spans the years and bridges the gulf between East and West. This very timelessness in conjunction with universality strongly suggests that Bhartṛhari as a Grammarian, metaphysician, and poet has come close to revealing the fundamental nature of consciousness itself. (1971, preface).

And, Houben, in the chapter on the *Vākyapadiya* and its interpretation makes the following comments:

Last century, the work of the grammarian-philosopher Bhartṛhari (c. 5th century AD) attracted the attention of indologists like Kielhorn and Bühler, who still had to work with the manuscript sources then accessible. Bhartṛhari studies made only slow progress in the decades which followed, and as recently as in 1977, Hartmut Scharfe could write that "The study of Bhartṛhari's thought is still in its infancy; critical editions and usable translations come forth only slowly." Nearly twenty years later, the grammatical and linguo-philosophical contents of Bhartṛhari's work, especially of his *magnum opus* the *Vākyapadiya,* are receiving mounting scholarly attention. One of the reasons for this must be that the subject matter of the Vakyapadiya is strongly consonant with crucial themes in twentieth century Western thought, in spite of the very different background and elaboration of the issues…Some important authors with whom Bhartṛhari's has been compared are Saussure -(Kunjunni Raja, 1969),Wittgenstein- (Ganguli, 1963; K. Raja, 1969; Shah,1991; Patnaik, 1994), Quine - (Aklujkar, 1989) and Derrida - (Coward, 1990, 1991; Matilal, 1990). (1995, pp. 11-20)

And Matilal says,

> What is language? Is one of the trickiest questions of our times. What Bhartṛhari meant by language was not always absolutely clear. But he said a lot of things about it. And it is on the basis of such writing that we can speak today about Bhartṛhari's theory of 'speech' or language. Our journey into the past can never be complete or final. This is not because we can never exhaustively discover the contours of the past, the land that we have left behind, from the control of theatricals that we now have at our disposal. Rather we take new trips to the old land to see new landscapes from a new angle of vision (1990, pp. 120-121).

The realization just dawns on what I might have missed if I had not been encouraged to investigate my vague intuitive feeling!

In this chapter I have attempted to present a brief rendering of Bhartṛhari's theory of language. Because of the technical nature of the arguments I have quoted extensively from the works of Bhartṛhari, scholars such as Matilal, Houben, Coward and Murti. What I also could not resist doing, is to present in their own words, these scholars' fascination with Bhartṛhari's philosophy of language, emphasizing his contribution to the study of nature and meaning of language.

In the next chapter I examine aspects of the investigation and comment on the reader/text relationship to reflect and highlight some significant realizations in my reading process.

Chapter 6
The Reading process: a result

In chapter seven of *Thought and Language*, Vygotsky says, "Let us consider the process of verbal thinking from the first dim stirrings of a thought to its formulation" (Kozulin, 1997, p. 217). In this section, I present a synthesis of the process of my reading experience, which itself, is a result of investigating the first dim stirrings of a thought. In other words this paper, is a reflection of pursuing a vague thought to its formulation. In presenting a synthesis of my reading process I will

1. Give a brief summary of the main ideas explored in each of the five chapters.
2. Highlight parallel ideas in Vygotsky and Bhartṛhari discovered as part of the reading process, and
3. Indulge in concluding reflections on the reading process itself.

Summary of the main ideas explored in each of the five chapters.

In the introduction, I ask the question if it were possible that Bhartṛhari's *Vākyapadiya* served as a foundation text for Vygotsky's *Thought and Language,* because reading Vygotsky's text reminded me of the Indian Philosophical tradition. My method of inquiry based on the reading process was to indulge in interpretive self-reflection. This paper, therefore, accounts for what can happen in an encounter between a reader and a text. The reading process was concerned with exploring iconographic traces of 'Bhartṛhari's' (I use Bhartṛhari here in a cultural sense) thought in Vygotsky's *Thought and Language*. The reflections and commentaries in Chapter Two reflect my thoughts upon reading the Author's Preface and Chapter 1 of Vygotsky's *Thought and Language.* These beginning pages were, to me, full of ambiguities, which I, as the reader sometimes

questioned and sometimes tried to rationalize. To me it seemed that Vygotsky's problem and his approach was directed at how to bring about a synthesis of the Eastern and Western thought within scientific discourse. It is my reflection that precisely because of this, he needs to be placed within a global perspective, bringing together the theoretical traditions of the East and the empirical traditions of the West. This would help to accommodate the problem of consciousness, which Vygotsky claims, is the perspective that his investigation opens up (Kozulin, 1997, p. 255). The Indian philosophical tradition deals with the problem of consciousness systematically and logically, and had been the focus of attention of Western scholarship through Indological studies.

Within this context in Chapter Three, I question the conventional perspectives on Vygotsky. In Chapter Four, my attempt is to understand the discourse of Vygotsky's times, and to search for a historical grounding for the tracings of Indian thought in Vygotsky's *Thought and Language*. Such an exploration is in keeping with the idea that it is the historical reader, in all its aspects, that interacts with the historical text and author in all of their aspects. Chapter Five deals with Indian thought and Bhartṛhari's theory of Sphoṭa. As a result of this reading process, my speculation is that a genealogical view of the development of the theory of Sphoṭa could be shown as follows:

1. The concept of Sphoṭa can be traced back to the Vedic period, to the Mystical meditation of the Vedic ṛiśis - 4,000---1,000BCE
2. Patanjali provides the initial framework for the Sphota theory (150 AD).
3. Definition of Sphoṭa by Bhartṛhari (450 AD) in his work – the *Vākyapadiya.* Bhartṛhari gives a systematic philosophical analysis with illustrations of Word knowledge manifested and communicated in ordinary experience.
4. Logical analysis by Mandana Misra in his work - *Sphoṭasiddhi (690 AD).* Mandan Misra elaborates Bhartṛhari's theory.

5. Scientific experimentation by Vygotsky in his work - *Thought and Language* (1934). Vygotsky tests it empirically.

The above speculation rests on the assumption that Bhartṛhari's thought might have found an expression in Vygotsky's scientific experiments.

Parallel ideas in Vygotsky and Bhartrhari discovered as part of the reading process

I didn't find any direct evidence connecting Bhartrhari's *Vakyapadiya* and Vygotsky's *Thought and Language,* but there is much indirect and circumstantial evidence in support of this connection. In this concluding section, I would like to highlight significant similarities and parallels between Vygotsky and Bhartrhari. It is not within the scope of this paper to extend into a full comparative discussion of the thoughts of the two philosophers; however, as a part of the reading process, it is possible to give a few examples, which serve as indications signifying a possible connection or perhaps serve as an introduction to establish a dialogue between them. These signifying aspects of Vygotsky's text can be classified into those where Vygotsky gives details and discusses the findings of his investigations; and those where he chooses to use poetic language instead, leaving the reader with an impression and a presence. As examples of Vygotsky's poetic expression I refer to the commentaries on Vygotsky's statement "A thought may be compared to a cloud shedding a shower of words" (Kozulin, 1997, p. 251); also his references to atoms, - 'as an atom relates to the universe'; 'to a new direction'; and to a 'universal consciousness', which I discuss in Chapter 2: Quotes and commentaries.

The examples below, from the last chapter of Vygotsky's *Thought and Language* relate to Vygotsky's discussions on the findings of his investigations.

In chapter 7, Vygotsky says, that in the process of discovering the relation between thought and word he studied, in short:

> Levels of speech – Vygotsky identifies 3 levels—inner speech; egocentric speech; external speech. He also identifies a level still more inward than inner speech – “That plane is thought itself.”.
> Connection between word and object
> Word and reality
> Relation of word and consciousness.
> And the fact that words signify the general. (1997, p. 249)

Vygotsky explores these in more detail as the following quotes reveal:

> Word meaning is a phenomenon of thought only so far as thought is embodied in speech, and of speech only so far as speech is connected with thought and illuminated by it. It is a phenomenon of verbal thought, or meaningful speech—a union of word and thought. …Our experiments fully confirm this basic thesis.

Vygotsky distinguishes between two planes of speech.

> Both the inner, meaningful, semantic aspect of speech and the external phonetic aspect, though forming a true unity, have their own laws of movement… .However the two are not independent of each other. On the contrary, their difference is the first stage of a close union. There is an inner relatedness. As thought becomes more differentiated it is difficult to express it in single words. Conversely progress in speech to the differentiated whole of a sentence helps the child’s thoughts to progress from a homogeneous whole to well defined parts. In our speech there is always the hidden thought; the subtext. Because a direct transition from thought to word is impossible. Thought must pass through meanings and then through words.
>
> Thought is not begotten by thought; it is engendered by motivation i.e. by our desire and needs, our interests and emotions.
>
> Thought and word are not cut from one pattern. The structure of speech does not mirror the structure of thought. Thought undergoes many changes as it turns into speech; it finds its reality and form.
>
> The relation of thought and word cannot be understood without a clear understanding of the psychological nature of inner speech. Inner speech, speech for oneself; external speech is for others. There is absence of vocalization, it is abbreviated and incoherent. Context and sense of the word. A word derives its sense from the context. Inner speech is thinking in pure meanings; in inner speech words die as they bring forth thought.
>
> Then there is the plane of thought…Every thought creates a connection, fulfills a function, solves a problem. The flow of thought is not accompanied by a simultaneous unfolding of speech. The two processes are not identical…

(Vygotsky comes to the conclusion)

> If perceptive consciousness and intellectual consciousness reflect reality differently then we have two different forms of consciousness. Thought and speech turn out to be the nature of human consciousness.
> How to put thought into words. Thought has its own structure and the transition from it to speech is no easy matter. A thought does not contain of separate units.
> (Vygotsky, 1997, pp. 210-256).

As a comparison to the above, I present the following quotes related to Bhartṛhai's thought, roughly corresponding them with the categories discussed by Vygotsky. These are discussed in greater detail in Chapter Six.

Semantic aspect of speech and the phonetic aspect of speech; motivation:

> In his discussion of the distinction between word and sound , Bhartṛhari employs three technical terms: śabda/sphoṭa, dhvani, and nādā. By śabda and or sphoṭa he refers to the inner unity which conveys the meaning. The dhvanis are described as imperceptible particles which, become gross and perceptible sounds and are called nada. These nādā function to suggest the word, sphoṭa or śabda. And since these nādās which are gross and audible, have division and sequence, the word also has parts, when in reality it is changeless and sequenceless. Bhartṛhari offers the example of reflection in water. Just as an object reflected in the water may seem to have movement because of the movement of the water, similarly the word, or sphoṭa, takes on the properties of uttered speech (sequence, loudness or softness, accent, etc.) in which it is manifested…why is the unity expressed in the diversity called speech? In Bhartṛhari's view, it is because the spoṭa itself contains an inner energy *(*kartū) that seeks to burst forth into expression. What appears to be unitary is thus seen to contain all the potentialities of multiplicity and complexity like the seed and the sprout or the egg and the chicken. In the *Vākyapadiya,* Bhartṛhari suggests two ways in which the energy of speech causes the phenomenalization of the sphoṭa. On the one hand there is the pent up potentiality for bursting forth residing in the sphoṭa itself, while on the other hand there is the desire of the speaker to communicate Bharṭhari finds language to contain and reveal its own telos. (Coward, 1971, p. 37).

Word and Meaning; union of thought and word:

> Epistemologically, it is a two level theory as applied to linguistic cognition. The Sphota is a necessary intermediary and is called the Madhyamā vāk as distinct from empirical speech called vaikhari vāk. These two belong to different orders-one is empirical and the other is submerged and hidden and therefore has to be excited and manifested by the overt sounds. The relation between them is that of the soul and body, is one of identification or superimposition…that they (word and meaning) stand related and are generally identified implies that they both spring from some common source which is the ground of their being….Indian philosophers of language are not content to stop at any duality, the duality of Word and Meaning or the duality of Thought and

> Reality. As Bhartṛhari states it: "All difference presupposes a unity"; where there is a duality there is an identity pervading it. Otherwise one cannot be related to the other; each would constitute a world by itself. (Murti, 1963, pp. 368-369)

Levels of speech:

> In advancing the Sphoṭa theory of language, Bhartṛhari speaks of levels of language in the *Vākyapadiya.* According to Bhartṛhari*,* there are three stages of language of speech through which śabda or vāk passes whenever one speaks. The stage, where there is a complete identity of language and thought, is called the pśyanīi stage;. At the 'intermediate' stage, there is complete identity of thought and language yet their difference is discernable, it can be called the 'pre-verbal' stage. It is at this stage that the speaker sees thought and language as differentiable and this perception impels the speaker to speak. And then there is the vaikhari stage, the 'verbal' stage. There is speculation of yet another higher level of language, that is, parā vāk. (Matilal, 1990, pp. 986-87).

Inner Speech:

> The next and the innermost stage is paśyanti vāk. Paśyantī is the direct experience of the vākya-sphoṭa - of meaning as a noumenal whole. At this level there is no distinction between the word and the meaning and there is no temporal sequence. All such phenomenal differentiations drop away with the intuition of the pure meaning itself. Yet there is present at this level a going out or a desire for expression. This is the telos inherent in the paśyantī vision that may be said to motivate the phenomenalization into sentences and words so that communication occurs. Since paśyantī is, by definition, beyond the level of differentiated cognition, it is impossible to define it in word-sentences. It is at the level of direct intuition and therefore must be finally understood through experience. (Coward, 1971, pp. 44-47).

Word and Consciousness and Word and reality:

> The metaphysical view of Bhartṛhari is that whatever is called śabda, 'language' and artha, 'meaning', 'thought' or 'things-meant', are one and undifferentiated in their pre-verbal or potential state. Before the utterance, it is argued, the language along with whatever it conveys or means is like the yolk of a peahen's egg. In that state all the variegated colours of a full grown peacock lie dormant in potential form. Later these colours are actualized. Similarly, in the self of the speaker or the hearer, or whoever is gifted with linguistic capacity, all the variety and differenciation of linguistic items and their meanings exist as potentialities, and language and thought are identical at that stage (Matilal,1990, p. 86)
> …. The sphoṭa is ultimately said to be in every sentient being. It is the linguistic capability of man, which is essentially intertwined with Consciousness….The ultimate reality for Bhartṛhari is the Absolute Consciousness which is identical with Śabdabrahman, the Eternal Verbum Within this theory consciousness and thought are intertwined, and language is the base of all human activity. (Ibid,. 1990, p. 95)

Impossibility of a direct transition from Thought to word

> From the point of view of Bhartṛhari's sphoṭa or the notion that language is an integral part of our consciousness, both speech and writing can be the 'illuminator' of the sphoṭa. One is not primary and the other does not distort the sphoṭa. Both 'transform' the untransformable, unmodifiable sphoṭa, which is part and parcel of everybody's consciousness. In the light of Bhartṛhari's theory, therefore, both the translations and the original (whether vocal or written) are in some sense transformations (Matilal,1990, p. 131).

As mentioned above the parallels highlighted surfaced while reading Bhartṛhari and Vygotsky's thought. The examples above serve only as grounds to speculate that perhaps Bhartṛhari and Vygotsky can be made to talk to each other*;* that it is possible do so became evident to me after my study of the two.

Reflections on the reading process

This paper has focused on the process of reading itself, and I would like to say a word about it. Caught between the dynamics of the text and the reading, my experience as the reader of Vygotsky's text, has left me with the realization that the process of interpretation is the act of balancing the context within which the text is interpreted by scholars, the direction the text itself and the author seem to point to, and the direction the reader chooses to take. Within this act, the knowledge that I as the reader brought to the reading of the text, played a crucial role. This knowledge was largely cultural and intuitive. This background knowledge gave the reading process the first momentum; the actual building, verification, refutation assimilation etc., then became a long and convoluted reading process – a process, where I, as the reader, set upon an intellectual as well as an emotional journey of surprise, anger, the euphoria of discoveries and the realization of how little one knew and how little one could do. This is where thoughts came to a point where the duality of existence assumed an experiential grounding. I became aware of the awesome force of the historical process, my own historical

embeddedness and a struggle to create 'meaning'. It became a process of self-realization, and the world was never quite the same again. Between the reading and the writing is a process all its own. At least that is how it was for me, who encountered Vygotsky's text with some background knowledge of Bhartṛhari.

This personal experience relates a subjective journey from one to another level of consciousness, as Bhartṛhari would have said it, which would include the formation of concepts through 'systematically organized learning in an educational setting' as Vygotsky might have said. However, quoting Tolstoy Vygotsky also says.

> As soon as we start approaching these relations, the most complex and grand panorama opens before our eyes. Its intricate architects surpass the richest imagination of research schemas. The words of Lev Tolstoy proved to be correct: "the relation of word to thought, and the creation of new concepts is a complex delicate and enigmatic process unfolding in our soul" (Tolstoy, 1903, p. 143). (Quoted from Vygotsky, 1997, p.218)

Bhartṛhari would describe this as a process towards mokśa*,* or liberation….

> Taking his stand on the essence of the Word lying beyond the activity of breath (prāṇa), resting in one's self with all sequence eliminated, After having purified speech and after having rested it on the mind, after having broken its bonds and made it bond-free, After having reached the inner Light, he with his knots cut, becomes united with the Supreme Light. Kārikā 1:123 Iyer, 1969).

Perhaps Vygotsky would describe the same as having encountered the plane of verbal thought: "…the one still more inward than inner speech. That plane is thought itself" (1997, p. 249).

In *Thought and Language* Vygotsky, suggests, "Facts are always examined in the light of some theory and therefore cannot be disentangled from philosophy. Who would find the key to the richness of the new fact must uncover the philosophy of the fact – how it was found and how interpreted' (Vygotsky, 1997, p. 15). My reading experience of

Vygotsky' s *Thought and language* is one long journey in search of the philosophy behind the fact, in search of that theory which cannot be disentangled from philosophy.

Further, let's look at Vygotsky' s ideas on the 'influx of sense', he says, "A word derives its sense from the sentence, which in turn, gets its sense from the paragraph, the paragraph from the book, the book from all the works of the author" (Vygotsky, 1997, p.245). Continuing his reflections on the influx of sense, Vygotsky further says, "The title of a literary work expresses its content and completes its sense…." (Vygotsky, 1997, p.247). Vygotsky's text, *Thought and Language,* is called *Myshlenie I rech* in Russian, and should be rendered in English as: *Thought and Speech*. This identification with 'speech' in the title of the Russian work is not fully realized in the title of the English translation. According to Murti (1963, p. 363) "The very life of language is communication. And the term 'speech' brings out this aspect more clearly. For Indian thinkers, language was primarily the spoken word, or speaking itself --- VĀK as it is called in Sanskrit."

My concluding reflection is, keeping the above in mind, a possible translation of the title of Bhartṛhari' s *Vākyapadiya* could be 'Thought and Speech'; and so we return to where we started – Could it be that Bhartrhari's *Vākyapadiya* served as the foundation text for Vygotsky' s *Thought and Language*?

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Glossary of Sanskrit Terms

[modified and abridged from Coward, 1986]

ahimsā, non-violence in thought and deed
artha, word-meaning – distinct from the sound of the word; the inner meaning of a word
brahman, the Supreme or the pure consciousness; also reality
buddhi, intellect
darśana, narrowly defined as schools of thought; no English equivalent
dhvani the uttered syllables of a word; also, in Indian aesthetics, the use of poetic words to evoke feeling that is too deep, intense and universal to be spoken
guṇa, characteristic or quality; generally refers to the three guṇas related to consciousness-Sattva,Tamas and Rajas. Sattva-the pure bright illuminating consciousness; Rajas-energy or activity; Tamas-materiality
Jñāna, pure knowledge of word or object
Kratu, an energy (within speech) that bursts into external speech thus bringing sequence and diversity to the unitary whole sphoṭa
Madhyamā vāk, intermediate level of speech, the pre verbal stage of external speech
Mimāmsā, one of the six schools of Classical Indian thought;
Mokśa, liberation from suffering and bondage of prakṛti/nature
nādā, physical embodiment of sound of the word
parā vāk, a fourth level of speech
paśyantī vāk, intuitive knowledge which comes in a flash
prakṛti, materiality, one aspect of the duality of our existence
pramā, true cognition
pramāṇa, a valid way of knowing through perception;
prāṇa, breath, the cause of speech at the lower level
ṛśi, the seer who receives divine knowledge
śabda, spoken word
Śabdabrahman, The supreme word principle for Bhartṛhari, the supreme reality
Sphoṭa, meaning whole within our consciousness, evoked by the spoken word; the sentence meaning as a whole idea
Vaikharī vāk, external speech, the level of uttered speech
Vāk, language which has different levels-from the spoken word to the highest intuition
Vākyapadiya, Bhartrhari's work- possible English trans. thought and speech
Vācya-vācaka, vācya –signified; vācaka-signifiers;
Vedānta, one of the six schools of Indian thought, identified with monistic absolutism
Vedas, the earliest of Indian texts, they consist of a whole corpus of texts
Vyākaraṇa, The school of Grammar; Bhartṛhari belongs to this tradition
Yoga, one of the six schools of Indian philosophy; describes a practical psychological discipline for achieving release; systematized by Patañjali

INFLUENCES OF INDIC THOUGHT ON RUSSIAN AND EUROPEAN INTELLECTUALS

Significant philosophers: Panini (400BC), Katyayan (300 BC), Patanjali (200 BC), and Bhartrhari (430-510 A D); of the Grammar School of thought;
Nagarjuna (200), Dinnaga (439-540), Dharmakriti (600-660): - Buddhist philosophers;
and Sri Aurobindo(1872-1850) a contemporary philosopher

RUSSIAN INTELLECTUALS

Russian Indologists:
Minayev, (1840-1890) was the founder of Russian Indology
He was a friend of Tolstoy
Stcherbatsky (1866-1942) worked with Indian scholars
And translated the works of Buddhist philosophers
Was a student of Bühler.
It is suspected Stcherbatsky's article,
Dignaga-Theory of perception,
Journal of Taisho University Tokyo.
1930. vol. 6-7 *Papers of Stcherbatsky*.
belonged to Bhartrhari a work not available at present.
Potebnja was a follower of Humbolt
He was influenced by his ideas on inner speech
He was a Sanskritist

Members of the Bakhtin Circle:
Bakhtin,(1895-1975) borrowed profusely from Cassier
It is said Bakhtin's thought has more than a cor-relation
With the philosophy of Nagarjuna the Buddhist philosopher
He was a neo-Kantian
Kagan (1889-1937) student of Cassier; founder of the Bakhtin Circle
Voloshinov(1895-1936) also worked with Cassier's ideas.

Russian School of Romantic Poetry
Russian Formalists
Members of the Socio-religious Society of St Petersberg

N. Roerich ((1874 - 1947) Artist, Philosopher linguist
Started Urusvati Himalayan Research Institute.

Tolstoy(1828-1970) was greatly influenced by Indic thought

EUROPEAN INTELLECTUALS

George Bühler – German Indologist.
He had studied Bhartrhari. Probably had to work from manuscripts

Cassier (1874 - 1945) was Bühler's student.
He had a great influence on the Bakhtin Circle. Cassier greatly admired the work of Humbolt.
Howard Coward mentions that Humbolt was greatly influenced by Bhartrihari.

William von Humbolt: **(1767-1835)**
German Indologist
and comparative linguist

Ferdinand Saussure: **(1857-1913)**
Professor of Indo European linguistics and Sanskrit; founder of modern linguistics
Started the structuralist revolution which had wide spread repercussions in many areas of European thought.
One of the sources the major of influences on Vygotsky Bakhtin Circle and the Russian Formalists and the school of Romantic Poetry
:

Schrödinger used Vedic ideas in his book on modern biology.

Schopenhauer (1788-1860) well known for appropriating from the Upanisads

Sorokin (1889-1968) Sorokin was associated with the Psycho-Neurological Institute while at St. Petersberg . Influenced by Sri Aurobindo's philosophy. He conducted Scientific experiments on the practice of yoga.

Lev Semenovich Vygotsky (1896-1934)

Author of '*Thought and Language'.* Vygotsky was a neo-Kantian, influenced by structuralism- and therefore by Saussurean linguistics and according to Werstch, indebted to the Formalists for the formation of the most important idea in his cultural-historical theory of the development of higher mental functions—that of semiotic mediation. Did Vygotsky know or work with other neo-Kantians such as Bhaktin and his group, and Stcherbatsky, or the Roerichs? Was he aware of the scientific experiments of Sorokin and Schödinger?

The above is a very concise chart shows possible filtering of Indic thought through European intellectuals, to influence the development of Vygotsky's thought concerning - thought and language.